

A

LETTER

TO

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

ON THE SUBJECT

OF

BRITISH COLONIAL SLAVERY.

BY

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TO

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

SIR,

IT was only of late I had my attention drawn to the sentiments expressed by you, at the close of last Session, on Mr Brougham's motion in the House of Commons, on the subject of Colonial Slavery ; and as it appears to me, that these sentiments, however briefly stated, embrace matter of extensive import, and of the deepest interest to the cause of negro emancipation, I conceive no apology necessary for bringing them more prominently into view, for the serious consideration of the public.

I am one of those who, from the commencement of your political career, have regarded you with respect on account of your talents, and with esteem for that manliness, and candour, and straightforwardness which have thrown a robe of light around them ; and these feelings towards you, were not rooted up, even by that change of conduct in the Popish question, which brought down such a torrent of vituperation upon you. Although I myself unwaveringly adhered to your first, and, as I think, soundest views on that subject, I gave you credit for acting conscientiously in the change of your conduct. and allowed to you, that liberty of judging of the force of existing circumstances, which I would, if similarly situated, have claimed for myself. I mention these feelings of respect and esteem, from an humble individual to an exalted statesman, that you, should these pages be honoured by your perusal, or if not that those who do read them, may have the assurance, that in them there is “ nought set down in malice ;” and that the freedom with which your statements and procedure are commented on, is the result of a strong impression of the responsibility which attaches to

every free Briton with regard to British Colonial Slavery. I beg at the outset too, to disclaim all feeling of hostility to the Colonists, or to those connected with them, on any other point than their systematic adherence to the evils of Colonial Slavery. Viewing that system as a monstrous usurpation, and being from principle in the habit of calling things by their proper names, it will be impossible for me to write on the subject, without using language, as applicable to the system, and the thing itself, which I would deem quite unwarrantable, if applied to the individuals unhappily implicated in that system.

Mr Brougham's motion was, that the House should pledge itself to proceed, at the earliest practicable period in the next Session of Parliament, to take into its serious consideration, the mitigation and final abolition of slavery; and this motion he introduced by a luminous and heart-stirring speech, directed against the principles and practice of Colonial Slavery, and illustrated by some atrocious cases which, though attempted to be palliated, could not be denied. After some skirmishing by the regular troops enlisted for the West Indian body, and a diversion in their favour by Mr Wilmot Horton, who, with a profession of being friendly to Negro freedom, has, as it appears to me practically taken a uniform and active part in rivetting the Negro fetters, Sir George Murray delivered his sentiments, which, in as far as regards the principles of our Colonial Slavery, require only to be conscientiously and faithfully acted upon, to produce every thing the British public can desire, in redemption of the pledge given by his Majesty's government in the year 1823. As the organ of administration, and the propounder of their views, you concluded the argument, if argument it may be called, on the part of Mr Brougham's opponents; and having examined different reports of your speech, and endeavoured to make the following extracts from it with that candour of which your general conduct sets a noble example, it appears, on the points to which I mean to refer, to have been delivered, if not in the following words, at least with the following expression of thought and sentiment:—

“ The motion,” you say, “ was, that they should so ameliorate the condition of slaves, as to lead to the final abolition of slavery. Now I am not prepared to give any such pledge until I see the means by which the final abolition can be brought about. Would it not be most unfair to the unfortunate owners of slaves, to talk of emancipation,

without at the same time including a compensation to the slave owners. I admit, that if I were in an argument on the matter with the slave, and he asked me, by what title I held him in slavery, it would be difficult to give a satisfactory answer ; but talking here in the House of Commons, it is different ; and looking at the mode in which the present owners of slaves have obtained a property in them, we should consider, that the claim of compensation was as much founded in justice as the claim for any other kind of property."

" I admit that I cannot contemplate what has occurred with respect to some individual cases of atrocity towards slaves, without deep regret.—When I heard of those cases, such as that of the Mosses at the Bahamas, I looked upon them as the acts of individuals, repugnant to the general feelings of the Colonists ; but I own I see with deep regret, the sympathies of a whole colony excited by the punishment of such individuals, and enlisted on the side of the wrong doer against the slave ; a fact which ought to lead the House to endeavour to encourage, by every means, a kindly feeling between the black and white population. Still I should rather let the necessary measures originate in the kindly feelings of the Colonists themselves, for it appears to me that little good can be expected from reluctant legislation." " On the question of evidence, I do not see why the slave should not be capacitated to give evidence. It has been tried in Grenada and Tobago, and no bad effect has resulted from it. " I would have it known, that though I am not a friend to the taxation of the colonies by this country, I admit, in the fullest extent, the right to legislate for them, in respect to this question."

Now, Sir, however inauspicious this speech may be to the wretched victims of colonial tyranny, in as far as you seem virtually to retract the pledge which you and your colleagues gave in 1823, and to shrink from the contemplation of abolition altogether, I hold your admissions on the main points to be so important, that I am willing for them to exchange the hope which was founded on your sense of obligation to fulfil a solemn pledge. That it was a pledge, can admit of no doubt. Parliament resolved, not indeed to abolish slavery if consistent with the good of the slaves, but to take effectual means for fitting the slaves for emancipation at the earliest period possible ; and having the means of doing so

within its power, the obligation to emancipate was positive. Whatever becomes of the pledge, however, we have now the public and deliberate acknowledgment by a leading minister of the Crown, of the three following propositions, which are plainly announced in the language above quoted.

1st, That there is no good title in the slave holder, by which he holds his slave as property.

2d, That the charge against the colonists of practising atrocious cruelty, is true ; not as the recital of horrors long since past, but as the details of barbarity now going forward in its bloody progress.

And 3d, That instead of being the insulated work of individuals, the countenance given by the colonists, generally, to the perpetrators of these atrocities, proves that their sympathies are on the side of the wrong doer, and against the slave.

The object of the present little work is to bring out, in somewhat greater prominence, the length and breadth of the truths involved in these three admissions ; and when they are evolved and spread out before you, to ask you, and failing your response, to ask the public, whether it be in consistency with these principles, to adopt your conclusion, that it is best to leave the slave in his present condition, till the kindly feelings of the colonists shall voluntarily interpose, to burst his bonds, and restore him to the blessings of civil and religious liberty. Who would have looked for such a conclusion from such premises—from the head or the heart of Sir Robert Peel ?

Perhaps, Sir, your first admission, viz. *that the slave holder has no defensible title to hold his slave as his property*, is the most important of all, because if the master has no title to hold his slave, were law and justice to determine the point, there could be no room for any farther discussion on the subject. If the master's title to hold him, be not a good title, how is it that he is allowed to hold him against his will—how do Courts adjudge the slave who has escaped from his bonds, to be returned to his bondage ;—the only answer is, that though there be no title defensible on the ground of right, there is the title of the strongest—the right of power ; and in truth it comes to this—and it is because it comes to this, that every individual of the British nation incurs a load of guilt as a participator in the wrong, which it is incumbent on him individually to exert himself to the utmost, to roll away.

It is indisputable, that man cannot have absolute property in man—that the bones and sinews which his Creator hath given him, cannot become the chattel of a fellow creature.* These are the unalienable appendages to an immortal soul, and as it is the soul which constitutes the man, and that belongs not in property even to himself, but to God alone, while he may yield his labour and talents for the accommodation of others, in as far as it does not trench on his duty to his Maker, he cannot delegate the entire controul of himself to another, far less can he confer such a domination over his unborn progeny. Even therefore, putting out of view, all the iniquities attending the origin of Negro Slavery, and all the horrors of the slave trade, it must be palpable to every mind, which can grasp any adequate idea of the nature, and the destiny of man, that your statement, that the slave holder can have no defensible title to the slave, is a manifest truth.

But, what shall we say, when we contemplate the subject in the mirror of Christianity. When we read, that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, and that with God there is no respect of persons, all being in a state of condemnation by nature, and all being invited freely to come for pardon and grace, through the blood of Christ,—What shall we say, when, contemplating these things, we are addressed by an advocate for slavery, who maintains that the slave holder is entitled to prevent his slave from receiving religious instruction, because the light thereby imparted, would necessarily lead to his ultimate emancipation. The doctrine is, that the slave, soul and body, is the property of his master,—and nearly in that language did I once see it argued in a public newspaper. Few, perhaps, would now come forward so boldly to maintain that proposition, but I have no hesitation in saying, that it is practically maintained, at this moment, by the great body of slave holders, and, in particular, by the Colonial Assembly of Jamaica. It is an awful subject of thought, that above 800,000 immortal spirits, merely because these spirits are embodied in a sable covering,

* This has indeed been disputed. In the trial of Hodge, at Tortola, for the murder of a number of his slaves, it was pleaded that "a Negro being property, it was no greater offence in law for his owner to kill him, than it would be to kill his dog." Trial, page 39.—But even there the plea was repelled, and if a doubt were suggested from the toleration of limited service, I would answer that the rights of voluntary or penal servitude, do not reduce the *man* to a *thing*.

are put out of the pale of the law of liberty, and doomed to a state of bondage, which reaches to the privation of the means of grace. Need I enlarge on this point?—Has not the whole code of slave law passed by the Assembly of Jamaica, in 1826 and 1829, been disallowed on account, as Sir George Murray expressly states, of its inadmissible restrictions on religious liberty. By that law no minister is entitled to preach without a licence from the district authorities, or to hold religious meetings from sunset till sunrise; and as the slaves are by law, compelled to work from sunrise till sunset in the field, and have to gather grass after their field labour is over, and as Sunday even where the markets are abolished, must be occupied by working in the provision grounds on that day for their own support, it is evident, that by law, the slave is entirely excluded from all opportunity of attending on the means of grace. In the cases where slave congregations are formed, it is owing to the humanity of individual owners whose practice is better than the law.

But what are the restrictions on religious liberty? they will be best explained by a statement of facts, and as this is a matter of the greatest importance, I must detain you more than I could wish, with a somewhat lengthened detail.

As the circumstances of the martyrdom of the Missionary Smith, have been so publicly discussed, I shall only refer to that foul transaction, as a proof that the mass of the influential people in Demerara, were so blinded by their prejudices, and steeled by their familiarity with human misery, that they thirsted for the life of a pious minister of the gospel, because he communicated that gospel in its purity and its grace to the slave population. To conceive of a slave as an heir of immortality, and to treat him accordingly, was to them an unpardonable crime, which could scarcely be expiated by a lingering death.*

The assault on Mr Shrewsbury, and the demolition of his chapel at Barbadoes, was accomplished by a mob, composed not of a poor and desperate rabble, but of the better classes of the inhabitants, if better they may be called, who could commit such an outrage

* Mr W. Smith, on 16th July last, stated in Parliament, that in a recent petition from certain slave owners of Demerara, it was alleged that Negroes were as much property as chairs and tables.

against the Majesty of God—such an outrage on the laws of civilized society. And what was it that a few years thereafter, on 21st April 1827, caused the following resolutions to be published by the vestry of the parish of St Lucy, in the same island, Sir R. A. Alleyne in the chair, but the proud and contemptuous feelings of an unsubdued heart, which put at defiance the declaration of the Holy Spirit, “That of one blood, God made all the nations of the earth.” Resolved 2d, That in all communities, distinctions of rank are necessary to the safety and wellbeing of society, and more especially in such a one as ours, *where the hand of nature* has drawn a mark of distinction between the proprietor of the soil, and its dependents. 3d, That any attempts proceeding from the ministers of religion to destroy these distinctions, to amalgamate and level the two classes of our country, must tend to endanger the safety and property of the white inhabitants, and cannot be otherwise than injurious to the civil condition, and religious improvement of the black population, by exciting in their minds discontent, and views inconsistent with their situation, and in the proprietors a just jealousy of those who are appointed to the office of the religious instruction of the slaves. 4th, That it is with deep concern that the inhabitants of this parish, have observed the frequent attempts made by the rector of the parish, to destroy the distinctions which they deem so necessary to their safety, more especially evinced by his offensive sermon on Easter Sunday, and his disgraceful conduct while administering the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, thereby endeavouring to alienate the slaves from a sense of their duty, by inculcating doctrines of equality inconsistent with their obedience to their masters, and the policy of this island.”

The rector, Mr Harte, had preached redemption by the blood of Christ, to all, Jew and Gentile, bond and free; and he had administered the sacrament to the humble believing slave, kneeling at the lower end of a range, at the top of which knelt his intolerant master. The proud heart could not brook such propinquity, and a petition was sent up to the Lord Bishop of the diocese, praying to be relieved from such insults and injuries, by the removal of the minister “who had lost,” it was said, “the confidence, respect and regard of every white inhabitant of the parish.” It is to the credit of the Bishop, that instead of removing Mr Harte, he gave an unqualified appro-

bation to his conduct ; but although this worthy rector may thus be sustained in his place by ecclesiastical power, is it not plain that a Missionary in the parish of St Lucy, could not stand for a week before such a spirit of intolerance and persecution?

In Jamaica, an attempt was made to expel the whole Missionary body at once, under cover of an Act against Sectarianism ; and finding this could not be altogether accomplished, the Assembly has crampèd the liberty of the preachers of the gospel, so as to give opportunity for much persecution.

On Christmas day, 1826, in the parish of St Anns, an assault was made on the meeting house, and dwelling of Mr Ratcliffe, a Methodist Missionary, the white soldiers of the regiment of militia being on guard in the vicinity of the church. While the guard remained inactive, the assailants fired their muskets, into the house where the Missionary, his wife, children, and servant ; were, not hurriedly, but by word of command. And although Providence frustrated their savage purpose, no less than 16 balls which had been so fired, were extracted from the wainscoat of the room.

The next attack was more fatal. Having assumed as law, that no minister should preach without the license, of the magistrate of each particular parish, the Rev. Mr Grimsdall, a Methodist Missionary, was arrested on a charge of preaching without such licence, and thrown into a loathsome dungeon, the pestilential atmosphere of which soon terminated his life. This victim having, like the Missionary Smith, sunk under persecution, with impunity to the persecutors, courage was taken, and in Aug. 1828, the Rev. Mr Whitehouse was arrested on a charge of preaching at a place which had not been licensed, and was thrown into the dungeon which had proved fatal to Mr Grimsdall. "On entering it," he says, "I found it occupied by an insane black woman, whom the jailor immediately ordered to be removed. The cell was exceedingly filthy, and the stench was unbearable. It was now 8 o'clock, and the jailor said he must lock up. I observed, that the cell floor might at least be swept, which a few friends immediately attended to. There was no bed provided for me, not even one of straw. A large quantity of vinegar, and camphorated rum was thrown in upon the air and walls, for the purpose of counteracting the very disagreeable effluvia which proceeded from the filth, with which the place abounded ; but this produced very lit-

tle effect. The sea breeze had subsided, and the only window from which I could obtain the least air, was just above the place in which all the filth of the premises is deposited. There are three other apartments on the same floor, which are separated from this, only by low walls, above which is wood lattice work,—two of them form the hospital, and one is now occupied by three sick men. The four apartments contain a space of 35 feet by 25; underneath the floor are three other apartments—one of them is occupied by about a dozen unhappy creatures, who are to be tried for various offences, at next Quarter Sessions,—another by two men who are under sentence of death for murder,—and the third, by a number of slaves who have been taken by the Marshal for debt, and are waiting to be sold. One of the wretched men under sentence of death, is very sick, and his groans, together with the grating noise of the irons of the several prisoners, and the intense heat of the place, prevented me from sleeping many minutes together; besides, I was so much affected by the stench of the jail and hospital, that I was obliged to be constantly dipping my handkerchief into strong camphorated spirits, and apply it to my nostrils." Mr Woodhouse having asked his fellow Missionary, Mr Orton, to preach to his congregation in his absence, that gentleman on discharging the duty was also seized and thrown into the same loathsome jail. His health, which was more delicate than that of his companion, soon sunk; and in order to rescue him from immediate death, an application was made for his removal. This was accomplished, and the moment the case came before the Chief Justice, he declared the imprisonment illegal. Mr Woodhouse recovered strength, but Mr Orton's frame was irrecoverably injured, and he was obliged to return to Britain in a state of exhaustion which, in all probability, will never be overcome. The review of these transactions, as well as the persecuting clauses of the disallowed acts sufficiently manifest the hostility of the planters to the religious instruction of their slaves.

Mr Huskisson, in his dispatch in Sept. 1827, had explained to the governor, Sir John Keane, when he disallowed these persecuting clauses, that religious toleration was outraged by them all, and that therefore they could not be sanctioned, and yet in the face of that communication from the colonial Secre-

tary, the colonists proceeded with their persecutions to the utmost verge of ingenious cruelty.

And what has been done to protect the missionaries or their flocks? Some of the magistrates have been displaced from office. But what protection does that afford? None. The body of the magistracy are of one mind. The enactments of the Assembly prove this, and we have a proof which must come still more powerfully on our feelings, in the following affecting cases of torture inflicted on slaves for attending chapel, and praying with their brethren.

Mr Huskisson, in his remarks on the clause ordaining that all slaves preaching or teaching should be flogged, says, "Amongst some of the religious bodies who employ missionaries in Jamaica, the practice of mutual instruction is stated to be an established part of their discipline, therefore so long as the practice is carried on in an inoffensive and peaceable manner, the distress produced by the prevention of it will be compensated by no public advantage." If these be really the sentiments of his Majesty's Government, and not merely an official phrase, intended to delude the public, into a confidence which may lull their feelings to rest on this momentous question, why was nothing done to disarm the colonists of the power, if it was impossible to deprive them of the will to continue such merciless—such impious oppression? It being now a fixed point in the case, that the Colonial legislature will do nothing, why does not the British legislature at last interpose? How is it that the following affecting tales have now to be told, and that the cruelties they relate, have called forth, not one expression, so far as is yet known, of disapprobation from the British Government, or one movement in advance to prevent the repetition of such atrocious outrage? The narratives will be found in the Anti-Slavery Reporter,* No. 65, which gives a somewhat more particular detail than is contained in the Appendix to the Wesleyan Missionary Report, which, however, states distinctly the main facts of the horrible story.

* Much obliquity has been attempted to be thrown by the friends of the colonial system, on this highly talented work. I think it right to say, that it appears to me, that not one instance of misrepresentation has been established against it; and that the wonder is, how, in such a field of discussion, so few casual errors should occur. These errors are always frankly corrected, and even the correction, in general, tends to throw additional light on the iniquity of the system.

The first is that of a slave, named Henry Williams, belonging to an estate called the Rural Retreat. The owner of the estate is a lady residing in Scotland, to whom it has lately descended by inheritance. Her attorney is a magistrate of Jamaica. The late owner of this estate had placed unlimited confidence in Henry Williams, and had been in the habit of employing him under his own direction, as sole manager of the property. Having thus been a favourite with his deceased master, he was in very respectable circumstances, and his conduct is said to have uniformly been such that he had never, during that master's lifetime, been subjected to corporal punishment. He had for years been a member of the Methodist Society, and had given such evidence both of intelligence and piety, that in March, 1829, he was appointed the leader of a class. The attorney hearing of this appointment, expressed his displeasure. "I hear," he said, "you are become a great preacher at the Methodist chapel, but if ever you go there again, I will send you to Rodney Hall workhouse."† Henry replied, that he was no preacher, but that he had attended the chapel for years, and had received much good there, and had there learned his duty to God and to his master. The attorney charged him also with the crime of drawing his fellow-slaves to the chapel, and thus ruining both them and himself. Henry admitted the fact of his trying to induce others to go thither. He had himself, he said, been benefited by his attendance, and he thought he could not do better than advise his fellow-slaves to attend too; and, but for that, he felt confident that they would not have minded their business as they were now doing. On the following day the attorney visited the estate, and having summoned the whole gang before him, threatened them with severe punishment if they went again to the chapel. On this a female slave, a sister of Henry Williams, happened to heave a deep sigh. The attorney said, "Who is that groaning?" and perceiving who it was, ordered her to be laid down on her stomach on the ground, and caused to be inflicted upon

† This workhouse is situated in St Thomas in the Vale, and is a sort of receptacle for notorious delinquents. Slaves deemed deserving of extraordinary punishment, are said to be often sent to this seat of darkness and misery, because of the peculiar severity with which they are there treated.

her a severe flogging. From the estate the attorney went to the house of the Rev. G. W. Bridges, which is near it, probably to consult with his Rector on the means of checking this unhappy tendency to frequent the Methodist chapel. The next day Henry Williams having to pass that way, Mr Bridges called him, and inquired his reasons for preferring the Methodist chapel to the church. Henry frankly told him his reasons: They were generally, that he derived more spiritual benefit from going to the chapel than to the church. Mr Bridges then told him that unless he came to church himself, and brought his fellow-slaves with him, he was assured by the attorney that he must prepare for the consequences with which he had been threatened. On the succeeding Sunday Henry Williams, having received the orders of the attorney to attend at church with all the people, was himself present during the service. After service, the attorney asked him where the rest of the people were. Henry replied, that the people had told him, that Sunday was their own, and that some of them had gone to the Methodist chapel, and others had gone in other directions, (probably to their grounds or to market,) but that he himself, though resolved not to relinquish the chapel, had come to church to shew how desirous he was to obey the orders that had been given him. The attorney then told him he should be sent to Rodney Hall workhouse. Thither, in a day or two, he was accordingly sent, and though perfectly ready to go without constraint, he was lashed round like a felon, his arms being fastened with ropes. This took place about the beginning of July, 1829. In the workhouse at Rodney Hall, he was put in chains, and repeatedly flogged, and so severe was the punishment inflicted upon him, that, after a time, he became so ill, that the superintendant deemed it necessary to remove from him the chains with which he was loaded, and to place him in the hospital, where his death was expected. The attorney, it seems, was much displeased with this lenity, alleging, that the sickness of Henry Williams was feigned, and signified his intention of removing him to a still more distant workhouse. His poor wife endeavoured to induce a gentleman to intercede for her nearly murdered husband, who had been thus literally brought to death's door for no other offence than that of attending the Methodist chapel, but in vain. At length, however, the circumstances of the case were brought to the knowledge of the

Editor of the newspaper called the “ Watchman and Jamaica Free Press,” who animadverted upon it in an able article with such just and pointed severity, that the guilty party appears to have caught the alarm, and Henry Williams was soon after released from the workhouse, and reconveyed to Kural Retreat. By this time, however, he had been so cut up with the severe floggings he had received, that his life was despaired of ; and the last account of him, dated in November last, was, that for several weeks, he had been “ confined to his bed, and obliged to lie on his stomach, day and night, his back being a mass of corruption.” Whether he has survived this atrocious act of barbarity, is stated to be still a matter of uncertainty.

The second case referred to, will occupy a shorter space ; it is that of a slave of the name of George, belonging to a lady in Jamaica, who is favourable to Missionary exertions, and who herself occasionally attends the Methodist chapel ; but who, it appears, had no power to afford full protection to her slave. George had been for several years distinguished as a person of excellent character, even among white persons in the neighbourhood. He was guilty, however, of the same crime with Henry Williams. He was a zealous and regular attendant on the ministrations of the Methodists. Shortly before the time that Henry Williams was sent to Rodney Hall workhouse, this slave had also become obnoxious to the Rev. G. W. Bridges, and in passing that gentleman’s residence, was stopped by him, and ordered to be laid down and flogged. The order was executed, and George was flogged with such severity, that it was with difficulty that he afterwards walked to his home, which was about a mile distant. His mistress, indignant at this treatment, sent him, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to leave home, to the custos, with a letter complaining of the conduct of Mr Bridges ; on this the custos wrote to Mr Bridges, and appointed a day for inquiring into his conduct. But before the appointed day arrived, a friend of the Rev. gentleman succeeded in compromising the matter with George, by paying him a small sum of money as a satisfaction for the injury he had received.

The following is taken from the Reporter, No. 64, as copied from the Jamaica Watchman of the 5th June 1830. It is given by the Rev. William Knibb, Baptist Missionary, and the transaction occurred at Savannah-la-mar.

" On Easter evening," says Mr Knibb, " part of my congregation assembled at my house to hold a prayer meeting, which is customary in all dissenting congregations, and an information was lodged against six of the party, charging them, 1st, with *preaching* and *teaching* : 2d, that the meeting continued till between 9 and ten at night : 3d, that it disturbed the neighbourhood ; and 4th, that a slave, John Wright, was there. All the charges were disproved. It was proved by the head constable and another gentleman, that there was no noise, and that the meeting was over before 8. John Wright was four miles distant, and therefore it came to the question of preaching and teaching. One slave, Sam Swiney, who was present with the express permission of his master Mr Aaron Deleon, was selected by the magistrates for punishment, because " he prayed without book," "and praying and preaching were synonymous terms." I explained, says Mr Knibb, to Mr Finlayson, the chief magistrate, the nature of the meeting ; told him that dissenters made use of no set form of prayer, and that there was a manifest difference between preaching and praying ; he replied there was not, they were the same, praying meant teaching, and preaching meant teaching, and it was nonsense to make a difference. " Mr Knibb," he said, " you have done very wrong, and if you do so again I'll take away your license." His power was limited as to the white man who had taught the Negro to pray, but he had unlimited authority over the poor black man from whom he desired to banish the spirit of prayer. " Early in the following morning," says Mr Knibb, " I went to see the disgusting scene that was thus enacted. What my feelings were, I will not now express, for I beheld a fellow creature, a respectable tradesman of his class, stretched indecently on the earth, and lacerated with a cart whip, and immediately after chained to a convict and sent to work on the road."

Does not the momentous question recur, whether the British Government have delivered themselves from the charge of negro blood, by the mere disallowance of certain barbarous enactments? But these restrictions on religious instruction, you must be well aware, are not confined to the prohibition of the means of grace through missionary labours. The compulsory employment of the slaves in labour on the Day of Rest, is equally fatal to the improvement of their minds. Even in the crown colonies, the new regulation as to the Sabbath, by which the

Sunday market is abolished, and the slave is to be freed from working on that day for the direct benefit of his master, while his master is not bound to give him another day to work for himself, were it not language undeserved in other respects, I would say, was an attempt at a fraud on the public understanding. The slave does not get the Sunday, if he must work on that day or starve; and yet it has been admitted, that no man has a right to encroach on the freedom of the Sabbath, which day has been specially appropriated by God to himself.

Equally destitute of sincerity would be the resolution to give the slave the full enjoyment of the Sabbath, and security for religious instruction, so long as the law refuses to recognise the sacredness and solemnity, and corresponding rights of the marriage tie. While the Colonial Law continues, as it does, to deny to the slave population the security of connubial rights, that population must continue to herd as the brutes that perish, in a state of society so directly opposed to the relations recognised and enforced by the Gospel, that it is utterly impossible their power can subsist together. The old Spanish Slave Law, far more tender, and far more just than the British Slave Law, encouraged marriage so much as to require, that when a slave on one estate, married a slave on another estate, it should be imperative on one of the two masters to bargain for the slave of the other, so that the married pair might live more comfortably together on one property. I am quite sure, that a large portion of the British public, after all the discussion and publications that have gone forth, are still so far behind in knowledge of the hideous features of colonial slave law, that they will scarcely give credit to the statement that marriage, the first institution by God on the formation of man—that on which the purity of public manners—the foundation of domestic peace,—the hope of a healthful, intelligent, and virtuous population all depend—that all these sacred ties of religion and nature, are broken and burst asunder by the reckless jealousy of the slave owner, who is afraid of every thing that would lift his slave above the character of a thing—a chattel—his property.

You admit, Sir, that there is no just title by which one man can be held as the property of another man. With Mr Brougham, the soundness of your understanding, and the honesty of your conscience, lead you to “deny the title.”

How is it then, that with him you do not "resist the claim?" "As a lawyer, you too must demur to the declaration of the right." Why not join him as a man, in setting up that law, superior in antiquity, higher in point of authority than that which any man hath framed—the law of nature? And, why not also with him defer "to the law of the Christian dispensation, which holds all men equal, and commands that you treat every man as a brother?"

Is it not clear, if you really believe that the slave holder holds his slave unjustly, that independently of all question as to damage to others, you are bound in justice to liberate the slave. The slave has nothing to do with the claims of compensation,—they may be competent to his holder, against those who were participators in his crime; but certainly, not against the *victim* of the crime. In the case of eviction of an estate acquired from a man, who had no title to sell, is the judgment for recovery in favour of the rightful owner ever delayed, till the question of relief competent to the party from whom it is evicted be adjusted? Was ever such a ground of delay in execution heard of in any court? The question of compensation, therefore, though it may be a very legitimate question, and one which ought to be seriously and liberally discussed, is quite unconnected with the question of abolition. They stand on totally distinct and different grounds. The abolition stands on acknowledged right. There is no defensible title you say, on which the master can hold the slave. That is a complete independent proposition, and if true, the abolition ought to follow, whatever becomes of all other questions regarding every person, other than the slave himself. The limitation with regard to the slave himself, arises from his incapacity in many cases for receiving immediate freedom.

One of the great evils of slavery is, its degrading influence on the slave as well as on the master; and the least reflection may satisfy a thinking mind, that the slave population may in general, be forced into such an unnatural state of existence, in regard to principles and habits, as like children to be unfitted for being committed to their own government; and in such case, that the law which is instituted for the common good, may act towards them, as if they were in a state of minority. It may be thought surprising, that with my notions of colonial slavery, it should appear to me at all admiss-

able, to commit the slaves to the guardianship of the present slave holders, with all the protection which the enactments of a British Legislature can afford them; yet, I see no way of extricating the matter, but by the adoption of that principle, as one, upon which a gradual and progressive abolition may be preferred, in consistency with the proposition, that the slave holder has no defensible title of property in the slave.

The advantage of adopting and acknowledging such a principle, is, that the great work may be carried on safely, and with benefit to all parties. But from your admissions, the reason which impedes the immediate emancipation of the existing generation, has no application to the generations to come; and, therefore, I would expect that you would be prepared to accede to the declaration, that all children to be born after the 31st December next, shall be free. There is in the case of unborn children no title to hold, and there is no ground, in respect of them, more than of the master, on which the necessity of a guardianship should be established. A claim of compensation may be made and discussed in this case as well as in the other, but that claim ought not at all to interfere with the declaration of the freedom of the child.

I observed on a petition being read in the House of Lords, and an intimation made, that a proposition for declaring children free from a certain date, would be submitted to Parliament, his Grace the Duke of Wellington is represented to have said, that he would not listen to the proposition to make the children free born, till a plan had been laid before him, which would satisfactorily show how they would be cared and provided for.

This demur on the part of the Duke of Wellington, seems to be in accordance with your declaration, that you would agree to no pledge for the final abolition of slavery, till you saw detailed before you the means of effecting it. Both, if persisted in, and adopted as the rule of parliamentary procedure, would be destructive of the fondest hopes of the nation, and seeing it would be adding mockery to injustice, it could not fail at the same time to deepen the taint of that foul reproach, which has so long stained the national character. But surely such an evasion will not put the question to rest. It is as I have said, but a mockery of the people; will any one, for a moment, listen to his Grace's doubt as to

the power of providing for such a contingency; will it be tolerated, that the man, whose mighty hand grasps the whole thews and sinews of the state,—who is looked up to by many as if he were in the place of God, and has only to say the word and the thing is done,—that he shall put away from him the nation's voice, which is requiring from the government, the redemption of its pledge by the performance of an act of justice; and put it away by a mere intimation, that the people must, in the first place, provide the means of supporting the children to be born, before he will concur in delivering them from that doom, to deliver them from which, the whole mass of the people have united their supplications. To what purpose, I ask, is his Grace put in possession of such extensive means, but to provide for the execution of such plans as the safety, or the prosperity of the country renders desirable: and what is it, that excludes a provision for this interesting portion of the subjects of the British Empire from his protection and care, so as to warrant his denying all redress, till that provision be made by others. It has been the declared opinion of the British public, that independently of all extraneous considerations, there should, after a certain day, be no British subject born in slavery: Supposing that such a law requires certain provisions to accompany it, are not the powers of his Grace's mind, and the wisdom of Parliament, equal to meet whatever such an exigency may demand? There can be no difficulty at all in the matter. His Grace has means, and power, more than sufficient, and therefore the presumption arises, that it is the will, and nothing but the will that is wanting. Even I Sir, will take upon me to offer a few hints upon this halting point, which may shew, at least, that some sufficient provision may, by those possessing superior wisdom and superior information, be easily devised.

The field Negroes have, in general, provision grounds which they work for their own benefit; and as the father, and mother, and children, when both parents belong to the same estate, all live together, the labour of the parents during the extra time allowed by law, including the Sundays which for them is no day of rest, does support the children as well as themselves, a small supply of four or five herrings per week for each child, more as a seasoner of food than as an article of food itself, being furnished by the proprietor. In the smaller Islands this ground indeed is only 40 feet square,—a

small garden, where they rear potatoes and other vegetables, and also fowls and pigs. But in Jamaica and the larger Islands, they have generally as much ground as they can cultivate; and it may be a key to disclose the reason of the earnestness, with which slave owners enforce the working of these provision grounds, that when brought into good cultivation the owner resumes the possession, and sets the slave to work on a piece of new ground, to be, in turn, cultivated and resumed. Although this resumption be quite in the spirit of slave law, oppressive and unjust; the result of the arrangement is nevertheless to afford to the slaves by their own extra labour sufficient means of support for themselves and families.

In this way the maintenance of free children would, in the case of field Negroes, be attended with little, or no difficulty. The parents, with very little assistance, would generally be able to support them, and at an early age, even before being fit for being apprenticed, they would be able to do some thing on the estate where their parents reside, which would go far to insure them the little supply, in addition to that furnished from the provision ground of their parents.

While excogitating these suggestions, I have had seated by me a person who was born a slave, and who by his own industry and good conduct, was able to purchase first his own freedom, and afterwards his brother's freedom, and that of his son, paying for each about L.200 sterling. He is now living in a comfortable independence in this country. He assures me, that except in the case of sickness, when some provision will require to be made, in consequence of the parents being employed in the field, there will be no risk whatever, in entrusting the charge of maintaining the free born children to the slave parents. At the age of between 4 and 5, they are employed in gathering grass, and weeding the canes, and even then their labour is equal in value to their maintenance.

But what a field Negro enjoys as the return for his servitude, house Negroes, and those engaged in trades enjoy also, though in different ways. It is of no moment what may be the mode. The Negro receives, or ought to receive, a reward for his labour, equal to the support of himself, and family while they are unable to work for themselves. It will perhaps be said, that he only receives the provision for the family, as the channel through which it flows from the master, whose property the family is; and that the master would not be bound to let that

channel flow to children, who, born under a new law, were not his property. But this is viewing the bonds of slavery, as drawn tighter than they are even by our worst Colonial Law. For it is admitted on all hands, that in practice if not by law slaves do acquire property: and the extent of that property is a frequent boast even of the chartered Colonists. It is clear, therefore, that the slave may have under present circumstances, something which goes beyond his own wants, and it would only be necessary to define the minimum allowance of provision ground to field negroes, and an equivalent to other slaves, in order to provide a fund sufficient for supporting all the children that would be emancipated by the proposed declaration. In point of fact, the children are in a great measure at this moment so supported, and it would require but a very small aid in particular cases to meet every exigency. But, whatever were the extent of the aid required, undoubtedly, the Duke of Wellington need have no apprehension, that the public would be unwilling to yield him the requisite supplies. One fund is obviously at his command, and in its application he would be hailed by a large portion of the community. Withdraw the bounties and protecting duties which are now so reluctantly paid for the maintainance of crime and oppression, or even if continued they will be more cheerfully paid if applied to meet the expenses consequent on emancipation.

And let it not for a moment be supposed, that there will be any risk in entrusting the free children to the enslaved parent. It is a groundless calumny against the Author of Nature, that the Negro is constitutionally defective either in the capacities of his intellect, or the affections of his heart. The whole regulations for preventing the separation of families acknowledged to be so important, yet by the frequent attachments and sales for debts rendered so ineffective, proceed upon the principle, that the affections of the Negro are so strong, as to require a violence injurious to their healthful existence to rend them asunder. The following pictures bring the operation of these affections impressively before us; and should satisfy even his Grace of Wellington, that he may safely entrust the Negro mother with her child.

"I . . . says Mr Birbeck, (Notes on a Journey in America, pag 20,) two female slaves and three children, sold by auction in the street: an incident of common occurrence here,

though horrifying to myself and many other strangers; I could hardly bear to see them handled and examined like cattle; and when I heard their sobs, and saw the big tears roll down their cheeks at the thought of being separated, I could not refrain from weeping with them." The following is a graphic description, extracted from the letter of a gentleman, travelling in the interior of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. "Having learned that there was to be a sale of cattle, farm stock, &c. by auction, at a Veld Cornets in the vicinity; we halted our waggons for the purpose of procuring a fresh spann of oxen. Among the stock of the farm sold, was a female slave and her three children. The two eldest children were girls, the one about 13 years of age, and the other about eleven, the youngest was a boy. The whole family were exhibited together, but they were sold separately, and to different purchasers. The farmers examined them as if they had been so many head of cattle. While the sale was going on, the mother and her children were exhibited on a table, that they might be seen by the company which was very large. There could not have been a fairer subject for an able painter than this unhappy group. The tears, the anxiety, the anguish of the mother, while she met the gaze of the multitude, eyed the different countenances of the bidders, or cast a heart rending look upon the children; and the simplicity and touching sorrow of the poor young ones, while they clung to their distracted parent, wiping their eyes and half concealing their faces; contrasted with the marked insensibility and jocular countenances of the spectators and purchasers, furnished a striking commentary on the miseries of slavery, and its debasing effects on the hearts of its abettors. The mother and her children were sold to three separate purchasers, and they were literally torn from each other." "A master of slaves," says an eye witness who lived near Kingston, Jamaica; "exercised his barbarities on the Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the Chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers, have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. One of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hidious howling, and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This "turned her heart within her," and

impelled her into a kind of madness ; she howled night and day in the yard, tore her hair, ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was :—‘*Da wicked Massa Jew, he sell my children, will no buckra Massa pity Negar, what me do, me no have one child.*’ As she stood before the window she said, lifting up her hands towards heaven :—‘*My massa, do my massa, minister pity me ; my heart do so, (shaking herself violently,) my heart do so, he causes me have no child, me go to massa house, in massa yard and in my hut, and me no se e’em.*’ And then her cry went up to God.” How just the remark of Cowper,

“ There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man.”

When a young freeman is of age to labour, it will be no trespass on his rights, to apprentice him to whatever occupation in the field, or in the town, or on the water, his particular circumstances may naturally suggest. Both in England and Scotland, this rule is applied to destitute children, and till the state of West Indian Society is changed by the general abolition of slavery, the children of slaves must be accounted destitute, in so far, that unless some beneficial arrangement for them is made by their parents, it will be incumbent on the public authorities, to provide by means of indenture, not only for their sustenance, but still more for their acquisition of industrious and useful habits.*

It has been objected, that were it enacted that all children to be born should be free, no children would be born alive. Were no improvement to be made in the laws for protecting slaves, I acknowledge, that such a result to a fearful extent might be anticipated ; but it would be a calumny on Parliament to express a doubt on that subject. Protection may, and must be afforded.

I pretend not, Sir, to say, that the above is in all respects an unobjectionable outline; but I have seen nothing yet to per-

* I am informed by an intelligent friend who was sometime resident in South America, that on the declaration of their independence, Chili, Peru, and Buenos Ayres, declared the freedom of all children born from that date, and it has worked so well as to be one great mean of paving the way for general emancipation.

suade me, that there is in it any thing injurious or impracticable; but my object was not to recommend a plan, but to shew that a plan might be devised, and executed, for meeting the difficulty suggested by the Duke of Wellington. Government alone are fully qualified to digest the best scheme for provision of the free born children, because they, alone, can command all the minute local information necessary for the purpose.

I have hitherto addressed myself to the argument derived from the want of title to resist the claim to emancipation, independently of all question of compensation. I beg your attention, now, to the accumulated force, with which the argument bears upon the right of redemption on full compensation being made, and the direct influence this view of the subject ought to have, upon the question of manumission in all its branches.

To recur to the case of legal eviction of property in this country, the indemnification, even in the most favourable circumstances, goes not beyond the value of the subject, as that value may be ascertained, by the cost of replacing a similar property in the room of the thing evicted. In the case of a man selling goods which had been stolen, and which he had purchased without knowledge of the theft, the purchaser from him will get back his money when obliged to relinquish his hold, which he must immediately do, on the appearance of the right owner to claim his property. If he does not get repetition of the precise sum, he will get nothing more than what would buy a similar article in the market, however he may have become attached to that which is reclaimed, and however innocently he may have made the acquisition. I am sure, Sir, you will not for a moment maintain, that the traffic in human flesh, can ever be carried on with entire *bona fides*. The character of vice with which it is so inherently imbued, is stamped indelibly on its forehead, and no man who purchases another man as a beast of burden, can pretend that he had no ground to doubt about his title to the property. The only parties who can stand out from such reproach, are those who have got slave property by succession. They are, many of them at least, unwilling participators in the evil; but the reproach will attach to them also, if they aid its perpetuation, by declining to adopt those means which are best fitted to promote its extinction. In no

case, therefore, is there the slightest ground, either in justice or sympathy for the owners of slaves, requiring, as the price of emancipation, one farthing more than the ordinary market price—that for which a similar slave could be purchased. Yet what has been the practice, in fixing the appraised value of slaves who have of late proposed to purchase their freedom. The principle and practice are both fully developed in the case of Pamela Munro, a young female slave in Trinidad,—a crown colony, under the absolute controul of the British Government. And whatever seed of oppression is, knowingly, allowed to spring up in a soil comparatively so much improved as that of the newly regulated colony of Trinidad, must flourish in great luxuriance in the chartered colonies, where their legislatures have admitted no restraint, and where the door of compulsory manumission has never yet been opened. Pamela Munro, a young female slave, 18 years of age, was to be manumitted, on payment of her appraised value by her mother ; but the appraisers, instead of estimating her value at the price she would have brought in the market, or that which would have put such another slave in her place, which would have been from £80 to £85 sterling, appraised her on a fictitious estimate, which they alleged was founded on Lord Bathurst's instructions, at no less than £260 sterling, about four times the girl's value. It appears from the observations of Mr Gloster, the protector, that the principle on which the valuation was made, was, that the value of the slave should be estimated, at the amount of the capital required to yield a revenue, equal to the hire which could be obtained for the slave ; while instances were occurring every day, of slaves being purchased in the market at 400 dollars, £85, and hired out immediately at £1 · 6s, sterling per month. Thus, in the one case, and that where the market price was paid, the purchase money was only five and a-half years purchase, while the principle adopted in the other case, established a value of seventeen and one-third year's purchase. This manifest injustice is grounded on the phraseology of the order in council, which, instead of requiring the appraisers to estimate, rather virtually prohibits them from estimating, the slave according to his actual value in the market, or what it would cost to purchase one of the same description, recommends to them in “ forming their estimation, to consider the quality of the slave, his skill in domestic service, or in any other labour whatsoever, *with*

any other facts or circumstances which ought to influence their judgment as to the price to be paid by such slave."

It is impossible, Sir, to reflect on the case of Pamela Munro, and to connect it with the language of these orders, sent out as the *optimum* of the British Government in favour of the slave population, without perceiving that the Government, whether intentionally, or from not being aware of the effect to be produced, I shall not venture to say, have practically established the principle, that the price of a slave is not to be that sum of money which would fill up the vacancy by substituting another slave of a similar description, but that sum which men, who may be influenced by the slave holder, or the prejudices of Colonial Society, shall put upon the slave, under one or other of the different aspects, which are with such ingenuous indefiniteness, suggested by the order. There is no check upon the exorbitancy of the value thus fixed, but a power in the judge to void the appraisement, in which case the process commences, and runs its course, *de novo*; and so it may continue to run a course every few months, during the whole lifetime of the slave, if the parties choose to incur the expence. In the mean time, the unhappy claimant is held in bondage, and if not driven to his labour by the cart whip, he is still liable without redress to be lacerated from neck to heel, at the caprice of his master, for a word, for a look, or for nothing.

The whole arrangement may be described by the case of a man claiming an estate which belonged to him by inheritance, but which was held by another, who had purchased it from a third party, who had upon the old principle of acquisition, usurped the possession by fire and sword. On coming into Court, the defendant admits the plaintiff's title; but says he cannot give up the estate till he is ensured in compensation, because, although he has no right, he has by his influence with the judges the power to keep the property. The poor plaintiff having convincing evidence of the truth of this assertion, pleads still that he may have his inheritance, and in compensation he offers to pay to the holder of it a sum sufficient to go to market, and buy an estate of equal value. "No," says the defendant, looking up to the judge to see if he may venture so far, "I will not be satisfied with that, for as there are a number of claimants coming forward, like you, to redeem their estates, land will become

scarce in the market, and, by and by, its price will be quadrupled, you must pay me *now*, that which would be the value of your estate *then*, and that is four times the price at which it may be purchased now ; and the plaintiff being unable to pay such an exorbitant price is, under the direction of this righteous judge, non-suited. But gross and palpable as this scene of iniquity is, it does not exhibit *all* the iniquity which this extraordinary order of Council introduces into the law regarding manumission. Sir, I am sorry to be obliged in adherence to truth, to apply such terms to the orders of a British Government, a government of which yourself, and other estimable men are members, but to my mind the term iniquitous, scarcely conveys the full idea of the moral wrong which is involved in them. Supposing, (to follow out the illustration from the evicted inheritance,) the plaintiff thus nonsuited, on account of his want of means to pay the awarded price, were met on his withdrawing from court, by a more wealthy neighbour, a man who knew the merits of the case, and was satisfied of the plaintiff's right to the inheritance, and who thus addressed him. " My friend, I compassionate your case, and feel a deep interest in it,—your claim is unquestionable, and had justice been done, you would have got the estate, whatever became of the defendant's claim for indemnification. He knew the title was bad, and in consequence only paid from 5 to 6 years purchase for it. But I must take some guilt to myself, for my father and all his family were parties, aiding and abetting the outrage, by which the defendant's author usurped your property, I therefore feel myself obliged to assist you in its recovery, and although I think a small indemnification may suffice in all the circumstances of the case, I shall supply from my own funds whatever is wanting in yours." The plaintiff returns rejoicing, in the full expectation of being instantly re-invested in his rights, and tenders the whole money required to be paid. The judge however, gravely asks him, Is all that money your own ? Is it every farthing the fruit of your own industry ? and on receiving the information, that a kind neighbour had helped him in his necessities, the Judge reads aloud to the mortified plaintiff, and the astonished bystanders, as a rule analogous to the case, by which he must decide the question at issue, the following order of council :

" If it shall be alleged by the master, that the money to be paid for the freedom of a slave or any part of it has been acquired by such slave by means of a donation *inter vivos*, made to enable such slave to purchase his freedom, the Chief Judge may stay the enrolment, till he shall have inquired into the truth of the allegation ; and if found true, then the Judge shall stay farther proceedings ; but without prejudice to renewal of them ; but if not proved, the Chief Judge shall proceed to record the slave's freedom."

Is it possible, Sir, to conceive a greater refinement of cruelty and injustice, than this law of manumission ironically stated to be an amelioration of Colonial Slavery. The effect of it, indeed seems to have been to impede, not to accelerate the progress of manumission.

No man who is not an out-and-out supporter of perpetual slavery can, I think, defend such a law as this—a law to shut up all the avenues of philanthropy, and prevent the communication of the smallest aid to a deserving negro, desirous by the fruits of his labour, as far as they can go to compensate his master for his services, and purchase his freedom. Of all the circumstances of oppression connected with slavery, it appears to me, though not the most important that this to the people of Great Britain who are writhing under a sense of the load of sin and misery, in which they are thus most reluctantly made participants, must be the most intolerable. Many, I have no doubt, are the schemes which, at this moment, are floating in the imaginations of the Christian community, by which they may do the very thing which is here so peremptorily prohibited. It is only a few weeks since I observed in an Irish paper, the account of a meeting of an Anti-Slavery Society, designated the " Hibernian Negro's Friend Society," one of the objects specified in the Report of which is, " The Redemption of Negro Slaves." " This has always," say they, " been considered worthy of the best of men." In their great simplicity, they had no notion that such a Christian object as this, was contrary to the law established by the Privy Council of Great Britain, and that the very communication of the blessing they were associated to bestow, would, under that law, seal the doom of slavery on the object of their compassion.

I am quite assured, Sir, such an order as this cannot stand. The whole charities of the gospel are against it—the

whole feelings of humanity are against it—the whole rules of justice are against it—and the whole disinterested population of Britain are against it. You have admitted, that to the slave asking his liberty, without offering one farthing of compensation, you have no answer to make why he should not be free; but you say, that in the House of Commons you can talk of compensation. Well, if you get compensation—if you get a shilling for what is worth a shilling, what more can you demand? You say freedom is a desirable state—Sir George Murray says slavery is injurious both to master and slave—and the Solicitor General says, the system is accursed. If these be truths believed by you, how is it that when full compensation is offered, you do not set yourselves to elaborate some legislative measure by which that offer shall be rendered effectual to enrich the master, and emancipate the slave. The whole parliamentary documents recovered under the investigations of the last seven years, proclaim the influence, which the permission to purchase his freedom would have on the habits of the slave; and if the West India body be really willing to part company with the evils of slavery, on condition of receiving pecuniary remuneration, is it possible to conceive a ground of objection they can have, to take hard dollars paid down for the manumission of their slaves? What a mighty sum would they receive, were one-fourth of the slave population to purchase their freedom; and by introducing fair and practicable regulations into the arrangements for accomplishing the transaction, I have no doubt that a larger proportion would, at last, by this means, achieve their liberty, and the masters draw a larger sum of money, than they can possibly realize by keeping the whole slave population under the present management.

The Rev. Dr Chalmers, a few years ago, published an interesting exposition of the principles of the Spanish law, by which a slave may purchase his freedom gradually. Having one day of the week, independently of the Sabbath, the slave, according to the doctor's views, could realize in three years what would purchase Friday, and in three years more, the produce of the two days at the same rate, would enable him to purchase other two days; after which, it would only require the earnings of a year and a-half, to complete the purchase of his freedom. The plan is simple, and could not fail in a very few years to produce a great change on the state of

the Colonies ;—for the opportunity alone is wanting to excite the industry and corresponding improvement in the state of the slave. In Honduras, though the price of the slave is much higher than in Demerara, the manumissions in consequence of the increased facilities, were as 28 to 1. Yet, from the mere circumstance of the slaves having more time in the former, than in the latter colony.

No doubt, while the horrors which now pervade the whole system of slave labour continue, no man who gains his freedom, will, in ordinary circumstances, subject himself to it. Supposing him by his freedom to be in some measure protected from its oppression, it would argue more callousness of soul than generally belongs to the negro, even under his present disadvantages, were he to continue unaffected by the outrages committed on his helpless companions. But abolish the whip, and secure to slaves the ordinary privileges of humanity, with full means of religious instruction, and there will be as little doubt, that where there is no particular bar from the cruelty of the owner, the slaves who are manumitted, as well as those who may hereafter be born free, will, in large proportions, hire themselves to labour on those grounds to which they are naturally attached, by a principle somewhat difficult to define, but which exerts over mankind an influence almost universal.

As the question of compensation comes broadly upon us, in the view of manumission which I have just taken, and the purchase of his freedom by the slave, with or without the assistance of strangers, exhibits one extensive and legitimate means of affording ample indemnification to the owner, I may be allowed briefly to take up the whole question, both as to the legitimacy of the claim, and the extent of its value, as founded in justice.

Upon the first point, the legitimacy of the claim of the slave holder, to be compensated for whatever is done by force of legislative enactment, in regard to his right of property—his “fee simple absolute,” as he calls it, in his slave, it must be admitted on all hands, that his claim of indemnification does not lie against the slave. He does not contend that the slave, in any period of time, gave his sanction to the atrocious crimes by which he was consigned to a wretched bondage, or that there is any act or deed of his, by which he has homologated that unholy usurpation. Every one, though they may not

have your honesty to acknowledge it, must be convinced, that in an argument with the slave himself, he can condescend on no such title to hold him, as can warrant a just claim of compensation for letting him go;—so that the whole claim lies against the country, and upon one sole ground—that we have been *socii criminis*—accessories after the fact, to all the rapine and bloodshed by which the slaves were torn from their homes, and consigned to a condition degraded to a level with the beasts that perish. Well, I admit the force of this; and still farther, I presume, I look through something of the same medium with yourself, when I perceive a person quite unacquainted with these atrocities, living in this country where the crack of the whip, and the groan of the victim are not heard, investing part of his fortune in West India property, as one source of improved income, and under the sanction of enactments by the British legislature, believing that his investment is altogether unchallengeable; or when I perceive another who has inherited an estate in these colonies, and upon the faith of the present value attached to the slaves as part of that inheritance, has regulated his establishment in this country, and fixed his family in society, in correspondence with such established estimate of value. Looking at the matter in this view, while I acquit the individuals of all or any particular and aggravated guilt above others, in the national sin connected with Colonial Slavery, and admit that there is a claim founded in justice against the country, I am not prepared to accede to the demands of the advocates of the Colonists who say, that the present value of the slave property is eighty millions sterling, and that before a step toward emancipation be taken, that sum must be paid down to them. Without a moment's hesitation, Sir, I say, that were that the only means, by which the country could be delivered from the guilt which now clothes it as it were with a loathsome leprosy, the eighty millions ought to be paid. It would still be under the wasteful expenditure of one year's British war. But I demur decidedly to the proposition itself, and reckon this very demand, just one of those perverted statements of the Colonists, by which they have outraged truth and common sense, and shewed in fact, their utter determination to admit of no fair or feasible compromise.

In the first place, eighty millions as the price of the slave population, which is reckoned at 800,000, is valuing them all

over head, man, woman, and child,—those who are burdens on the estate, as well as those who are efficient,—at the price of £100 sterling each; whereas the average price of grown slaves, exclusive of children, does not exceed £50; and the number of the children under 14, and the old and infirm who cannot be sold, may be reckoned at one-third of the whole, leaving only 533,336 to be averaged at £50, which would make a capital under twenty-seven millions; and allowing a small sum for the children, the whole may be stated at thirty millions. Now, although this is certainly so far under the statement of the colonists, as to render their exaggeration inexcusable, and to throw a shade of distrust over all the details of their claims, I am not disposed to contend, that it would be a light matter, for one class of the community, however upright their opinions, to put their hands into the pockets of another class, and empty them to that, or to any extent, without a fair participation in the loss. But much remains to be done before the colonists can establish a claim on the country for such a sum of compensation as thirty millions sterling.

Were it in the contemplation of the abolitionists, to put all the slaves to death, or to transport them to some other country, by which the lands might be left uncultivated, and the ordinary traffic carried on at present by slaves be entirely extinguished, a claim for a price by the head would be admissible; but that, I need not inform you, is not the plan proposed. What is wished, is to introduce into these colonies, the cultivation of the lands and the carrying on the trades, by means of free, in place of slave, labour; and the claim of compensation evidently must be measured, not by the present price of a slave, which is upheld by the existing system, but by the loss which would be sustained by turning his slave into a freeman—by comparing the net produce of the estate under the present management of slaves, with the net produce under a prudent management of free labour. I apprehend, this is quite palpable; but as it may be more palpable than palatable, I beg to illustrate it by one of the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when attempting to explain the *rationale* of his innovation on the sugar duties:—"He would mention," he said, "the state of the general produce of two estates of the same extent, and employing the like number of negroes; the one

having a finer sugar, and the other having an inferior kind. They rendered each 150 hhd. The finer sold at 66s. per cwt. fetching in a year £6,438; and the rum fetching £4,131—the gross receipt being £10,569. The duty to the Crown was £2,630 on sugar, and £3,340 on rum. Insurances, commissions, freights, and other expences incidental to the trade, amounted to £1150. The charge for cattle was £900, and the Negro clothing cost £600 more, the gross surplus being £1938. The other estate produced not more than £100, owing to the same causes." In this last case, though the Chancellor has not mentioned it, the inferior sugars must have been sold about 47s. 2d. per cwt.*

It appears from this statement, that while one estate yielding 150 hogsheads of sugar per annum, cost £2,650 of expence, and netted £1,938 of profit; another employing the same number of hands, and yielding the same quantity of sugar, cost the same expence, and left only £100 of profit. It is quite evident, that the difference in profit arises from the application of a large capital to an unproductive subject, and that it is only because the slaves are there, and the expence of them, at all events, incurred, that such unproductive labour is employed. The value of the labour of the slaves on the one property is no more than on the other—the difference in the value is in the soil, which is more genial in the one case than in the other; and the effect of the Chancellor's reduction of duties, is to give an additional bounty to the slaveholder having the poorer soil, to induce him to extract a little more of the blood and sweat of the overworked slave, by struggling against comparative barrenness, and raising sugar, where he would have been much better paid, by employing his slaves on some other production which, though yielding a smaller price, would have incurred a smaller expenditure. Holding, then, the labour of the slaves on both the estates mentioned by the Chancellor, to be worth £100, the free produce of that yielding the lowest profit, it may be calculated what is the value of the labour of each; and it is only in case that value exceeds the profits

* I apprehend the Chancellor has calculated loosely, and stated the expences of insurance and commission the same in both cases; whereas it is plain, that the inferior sugar, fetching a less price, would cost less in respect to these charges, though the others might remain the same.

of an estate worked by freemen, that it can be said, there is any advantage in holding the slave. Now it is proved by the very imposition of them, that if the protecting duties were taken off, and the East India sugar, after travelling double the distance, were let into the market on a fair equality, not only would this trifling produce of slave labour be swept away altogether, but the larger profit on the superior soil, would be insufficient to enable the slave estate to keep the market ; the proceeds would then be found to fall below the expenditure, and the slave would be an incumbrance, and not a source of profit, when so employed.

But this is not the whole of the evil attending the introduction of these protecting duties. In the case exhibited by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on an estate paying £2630 of duties to Government, on which there would be not less, I presume, than 300 slaves of all ages, there was only £100 of income to the proprietor ; but the East India Sugar, which would have come into competition against it, was kept back by a duty of 10s. per cwt., amounting to £974 : 1 : 3 on the 150 hhds. and the slave owner was thus enabled to draw £974 from the country, which would not have been paid for the produce of free labour. The whole of this sum of £974, therefore, has been extorted from the British people, in order to give the slave owner £100, to enable him to hold British subjects in bondage, and struggle against nature and religion by continuing the system of slavery. Why, Sir, do you not rather pension the West Indian planters, and admit their plea of pauperism. In truth, however, the operative planters have but a secondary and comparatively insignificant interest in their estates. It is the British capitalist,—the mortgagee who lends at high interest, and triples that high interest by commission on sales and supplies, that has the great interest in continuing the system ; and hence the dead weight on the deliberations of Parliament on the question of Colonial slavery.

The experiment made by Mr Steele is demonstrative on the point of the unproductiveness of slave labour under the present management. I have perused the detailed Reports of his operations, but abridge the following statement from Mr Clarkson's Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves. " Three questions especially employed his (Mr Steele's) mind, 1st, Whether he could not do away all arbitrary punishments, and yet keep up discipline among the slaves ?

2d, Whether he could not carry on the plantation work through the stimulus of reward? 3d, Whether he could not change slavery into a condition of a milder name, and character, so that the slaves should be led by degrees to the threshold for liberty, from whence they might step next without hazard, into the rank of free men, if circumstances should permit and encourage such a procedure. Mr Steele conceived, after mature consideration, that he could accomplish these objects, and he resolved to make the experiment gradually upon his own estate."

"At the end of the year 1783, he put the first of these questions to the test. "I took," says he, "the whips and all power of arbitrary punishment from all the overseers, and their white servants, which occasioned my chief overseer to resign, and I soon dismissed all his deputies, who could not bear the loss of their whips; but at the same time, that a proper subordination and obedience to lawful order and duty should be preserved. I created a magistracy out of the negroes themselves, and appointed a Court or Jury of the elder negroes or head-men, for trial and punishment of all casual offences, (and these Courts were always to be held in my presence, or in that of my new superintendant,) which Court very soon grew respectable. Seven of those men being of the rank of drivers in their different departments, were also constituted rulers, or magistrates over all the gang, and were charged to see at all times that nothing should go wrong in the plantation; but that on all necessary occasions, they should assemble and consult together how any such wrong should be immediately rectified; and I made it known to all the gangs, that the authority of these rulers should supply the absence or vacancy of an overseer in all cases; they making daily or occasional reports of all occurrences, to the proprietor or his delegate, for his approbation or his orders."

"It appears, that Mr Steele was satisfied with this his first step, and he took no other for some time. At length, in about another year, he ventured upon the second. He "tried whether he could not obtain the labour of his negroes by voluntary means, instead of the old method by violence." On a certain day, he offered a pecuniary reward for holing canes, which is the most laborious operation in West India husbandry. "He offered twopence half-penny (currency,) or about three half-pence (sterling) per day, with the usual al-

lowance to hollers, of a dram of molasses, to any twenty-five of his negroes, both men and women, who would undertake to hole for canes an acre per day, at about 96½ holes for each negro to the acre.

"The whole gang were ready to undertake it, but only fifty of the volunteers were accepted; and many among them were those who on much lighter occasions had usually pleaded infirmity and inability; but the ground having been moist, they holed twelve acres within six days, with great ease, having had an hour more or less, every evening to spare, and the like experiment was repeated with like success. More experiments with such premiums on weeding and deep hoeing were made by task work per acre, and all succeeded in like manner, their premiums being punctually paid them in proportion to their performance. But afterwards, some of the same people being put without premium to weed on a loose cultivated soil in the common manner, eighteen negroes did not do as much in a given time, as six had performed of the like sort of work a few days before, with the premium of two pence half-penny." The next year, Mr Steele made similar experiments,—success attended him again; and from this time task work, or the *voluntary* system, became the general practice of the estate.

In the year 1789, he erected his plantations into Manors. It appears, that the governor of Barbadoes had the power by charter, with the consent of the majority of the council, of dividing the island into manors, lordships, and precincts, and of making freeholders; and though this had not yet been done, Mr Steel hoped, as a member of council, to have influence sufficient to get his own practice legalized in time. Presuming upon this, he registered in the manor book all his adult male slaves as copy holders. He then gave them separate tenements of lands, which they were to occupy, and upon which they were to raise whatever they might think most advantageous. These tenements consisted of half an acre of plantable and productive land to each adult—a quantity supposed to be sufficient with industry to furnish him and his family with provision and clothing. The tenements were made descendible to the heirs of the occupiers or copy-holders, that is to their children on the plantations; for no part of the succession was to go out of the plantation to the issue of any foreign wife, and in case of no such heirs, they were to fall

into the lord to be re-granted according to discretion. It was also inscribed, that any one of the copyholders, who would not perform his services to the manor, (the refractory and others,) was to forfeit his tenement and his privileged rank, and to go back to the state of villein in gross, and to be subject to corporal punishment as before. "Thus," says Mr Steele, "we run no risk whatever in making the experiment, by giving such copyhold tenements to all our well deserving Negroes, and to all in general, when they appear to be worthy of that favour."

Matters having been adjusted so far, Mr Steele introduced the practice of rent and wages. He put an annual rent upon each tenement, which he valued at so many day's labour. He set a rent also upon personal service, as due by the copyholder to his master in his former quality of slave, seeing that his master or predecessor had purchased a property in him, and this he valued in the same manner. He then added the two rents together, making so many day's work altogether, and estimated them in the current money of the time. Having done this, he fixed the daily wages or pay to be received by the copyholders, for the work which they were to do. They were to work 260 days in the year for him, and to have 48, besides Sundays, for themselves. He reduced these day's work also to current money. These wages he fixed at such a rate, that "they should be more than equivalent to the rent of their copyholds, and the rent of their personal services when put together, in order to hold out to them an evident and profitable incentive to their industry." It appears that the rent of the tenement, half an acre, was fixed at the rate of £3 currency, or £4 sterling per acre, and the wages for a man belonging to the first gang, at 7½d currency, or 6d sterling, per day. As to the rent for the personal services, it is not mentioned.

And what with regard to profit and loss, was the patrimonial result of these great moral improvements? Hear his own words, in answer to a question put to him by the Committee of the Privy Council. "In a plantation," says he, "of 200 slaves, in June 1780, consisting of 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, though under the direction of an able and an honest manager, there were only 14 births, and not less than 57 deaths, in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of governing the slaves; the whips were taken from all the white servants; all arbitrary punishments were abolished, and all offences were tried and sentence passed by a negro court. In four years and

three months after this change of government, there were 44 births, and only 41 deaths, of which ten deaths were of superannuated men and women, some above 80 years old. But in the same interval, the annual net clearance of the estate, was above three times more than it had been for ten years before!"

It has been alleged that the arguments drawn from the experiment of Mr Steele, are quite fallacious, and that the advance in his returns, was altogether owing to the rise on the price of sugar which then took place. Admitting, that part of the advance might arise from that circumstance, in order to meet the argument, it would require detailed evidence from all the other neighbouring estates, to show that they had increased equally in value; this I am persuaded cannot be produced. The respectable individual to whom I referred for authority, as to the safety of intrusting free children to slave parents, informs me that when a slave, he was well acquainted with Mr Steele's estate, Kendal, his brother's wife being a slave on that estate, and he being in use to purchase rum for sale in retail, from a slave an overseer of Mr Steele's. He himself worked many years on the Horn estate at some distance; but he knew the estates in the vicinity of Kendal, viz. Guinea, Bromely, New Osburn, &c. and he knows that none of them improved like Mr Steele's estate. But even by the objectors, nothing, that I know of, is said to the fact that instead of 14 births, and 57 deaths in the preceding 3 years, the result of the last 4 years were 44 births, and 41 deaths, an addition when taken proportionally of 25 births, and a diminution of $33\frac{1}{2}$ deaths. This of itself was no small improvement.

The result then is, that there is no advantage in holding a slave; it is a complete misapplication, or rather a neutralization of power. As the tales about the comfortable condition of the slaves, are unanswerably refuted by an appeal to the bills of mortality, which shew their annual decrease in opposition to the laws of nature; so the clamour about the value of the slave, is overpowered by the decisive fact, that the produce of free labour even under the disadvantage of double distance, is able to undersell the produce of the slave labour. Is not the country, now grumbling from one end to the other under the burden of a heavy duty,—a duty rendered doubly grievous by the circumstance that it

is imposed in order to protect West India sugars, and support that system of slavery which it so cordially detests.

This burden from draw backs and protecting duties, great as it is (reckoned above £1,680,000) is not above one half of the pecuniary contribution which the nation is made to pay for the maintenance of slavery ; but a more revolting tax on that account is laid upon us still. When the imagination conjures up the idolatrous and bloody rights of the heathen, and we hear, or think we hear the screams of the children, thrown by the hands of their parents into the fires of an idol ; the heart swells with indignation and anguish. And yet these sickening horrors, from which we turn away with a feeling of gratulation, that we were born in happier circumstances,—never were so extensive in their murderous devastations, as the annual sacrifices which Great Britain makes of her children, on the altars of that charnel house of Moloch, the West Indies. About 20 regiments of the line are employed in our slave Colonies, in order to repress the natural risings of a population, subjected to a system of grinding oppression, which nothing but brute force can uphold. Of three regiments in Jamaica, containing about 2700 men, one third, according to the reported statement of Sir Henry Hardinge, died within the year ; and from information received by myself from several officers who have served in the West Indies, the annual proportion of deaths seems to be on an average one third. Estimating each of the 20 regiments at only 600 men in place of 900, which was the number of the three regiments above alluded to, there results a total number of 12000 men, of whom 4000 die annually ; while the average deaths proportional to 12000 at home, would only amount to about 3 per cent, or 360.

And what is the object, on account of which, under the compulsion of our Government, the nation incurs this enormous expenditure of blood and treasure, and nearly 4000 families in this land of freedom are annually clothed in sable and sadness. Is it not the upholding Colonial Slavery ; that slavery, which is itself a crime of the deepest dye ; a crime “the miseries of which, while they only exist by our authority, are perpetuated and aggravated” to use the emphatic language of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, “by the direct support and encouragement, which slavery receives from our blind and infatuated policy, adopted and pursued in opposition to the clearest dic-

tates of humanity and justice, and in the conscious infringement of every obligation, which we owe both to God and man."

And all this too in the face of the palpable truth, that slavery is a useless expence to the slave owner, as well as to the British public. Nothing can redargue the fact, that free labour raises and can sell sugar cheaper than slave labour, and if so, it rests with the colonists to betake themselves to a more profitable system, and then instead of requiring compensation, they would have cause of gratitude to the country, for compelling them to adopt what is their advantage, as well as their duty. When Mr Buxton first brought forward his motion, in 1823, a christian friend of mine who had succeeded to a large West India property, and for the welfare of which, like Sir George Rose, he has been labouring earnestly and, I trust, successfully, wrote to Mr Buxton, telling him he had a large interest at stake, but he was so much convinced of the justice of the cause thus undertaken, that shutting his eyes to his own loss, he wished to cheer him on in his course.—He thought by the emancipation of his slaves he would lose £20,000; but he was ready to acquiesce cheerfully in the measure. When I saw him soon after, I told him that instead of losing £20,000, I reckoned he would gain £20,000, as I was sure the exchange from slave to free labour on his estate, would to that extent increase the profit from it. I do not recollect if I satisfied my friend on the point; but an attentive consideration of the experiment made by Mr Steele in Barbadoes, had completely satisfied myself. Notwithstanding all your other avocations, I have no doubt the details of Mr Steele's plans, so successfully executed by himself, and so unhappily relinquished by his successors, are familiar to you. They have been assailed as was to be expected, but I have seen nothing to disprove them. The principles are founded in nature, and although one feels much fortified by having seen them actually brought to the test of experiment, I could not have doubted, independently of Mr Steele's success, that abolishing arbitrary punishments—giving slaves fixed allotments of land on payment of fixed rents—introducing easy task work, and paying them small wages while they defrayed their own expences, could not fail to raise the profits on any estate, where such regulations should be introduced. And therefore it is, that I consider the greatest part of the difficulty, in regard to the improvement of the income from West India property, to arise, from the inveterate prejudices of the

planters, and the natural lust of power, which prevents their adopting those measures which would benefit themselves ; and that merely because these measures would in some degree restrain their power, and raise the Negro in the scale of society.

Nothing can be more unfounded, than the hackneyed statement that the negro will not work except by compulsion. The protector of slaves for Trinidad, in his protest in the case of Pamela Munro, in enumerating the prices paid by negroes for their freedom, mentions one who was continuing with the master from whom he purchased his freedom, receiving wages; and the manager of a crown estate in that island reports, that having given the negroes task work, they were working so hard to earn two hours for themselves, as to injure their health, and require his interference to prevent them working too much.

With these views of compensation, I hold the payment on manumission to be a clear gain to the slaveholder, and therefore, that he can have no good ground to oppose its most extensive operation. It may be, indeed, that if the colonists cling to the oppressive system now in force, and if the British Legislature refuses to interfere, to prevent the misery of both master and slave, that those who acquire their freedom may leave the habitation of their bondage for ever ; and that while one large portion remains in slavery, there may be difficulty in obtaining such aid from freemen, as may be necessary for working the lands. In such circumstances the planters may suffer, but they will suffer only, because they persist in an odious system of oppression, and it would be an insult to all right feeling, to ask a compensation for that which is produced by their own misconduct. It will be found, I venture to predict, that wherever the ameliorations in the condition of the slave is cordially adopted, the manumitted slaves will, in general, remain in their old habitations ; and as it is to be hoped, that when they cannot longer withstand the cry of the country, and when the measures adopted to attain the end have been established, the Colonists will accommodate themselves to their circumstances ; and conciliate those whom they can no longer compel. In that case, the exceptions will be rare, where such desertions occur as to affect the profitable working of the estate. Where the manumissions become numerous, the competition for employment will operate there as every where else ;

and if the British Legislature would look more to the fostering and guiding the principles of nature, and less to the fears and prejudices of the colonists, the work of emancipation, which must proceed, would go on more smoothly and safely for all parties.

There is still one topic of your speech to which I mean to address myself, and I do so with some trepidation. The subject is so exciting that one should be afraid of his feelings; yet it is impossible to pass it by, for it lies at the root of the whole matter. The reason why the slave system is abhorred, is just because it is a system of injustice and cruelty, and two of the important admissions which you have made are, that the alleged atrocities are true, and that the perpetrators, and not the victims of these cruelties, enjoy the kindly sympathies of the colonists.

I do not mean to harrow up your feelings by an unnecessary lengthened detail, for, condense it as I may, it is long, as it is heart-sickening; but it is essential to the cause to select a few cases, which may display, in their true colours, both the particulars—I mean the barbarity of the individual owners, and the participation of the mass of the white population by their giving countenance to such individuals.

It is impossible, in a selection on these principles, to omit the case of Huggins, which, had it no parallels, might be held to have been an extraordinary demoniacal possession, not to be accounted as a part in any estimate of colonial oppression; but as it does not stand alone, but forms only one strong feature, one could not delineate correctly the whole picture without noticing this remarkable case.

Edward Huggins was, and is now for aught I know, a successful planter in the island of Nevis, owning above six hundred negroes. Besides working them all the day, he was in the practice of compelling them, when the moonlight rendered it practicable, to perform night work; which employment was carrying out manure to the field in little wicker baskets. In 1798, on the application of the British Government, a general council and assembly at St Kitts, passed an act prohibiting slaves from being turned out to work, except in crop time, before 5 in the morning, or after 7 in the evening. Whether the knowledge of the existence of such a law, or the repugnance of injured nature to submit to oppression, led to some desertions or appearance of insubordination, does not appear. No

insurrection or forcible resistance to his authority was proved ; but so it was, that Mr Huggins was offended, and resolved to take vengeance on the offending parties, unfortunately left by the law, and the feeling of the Colonists entirely within his power. Accordingly on the 23d January 1810, he went attended by two of his sons on horseback, to the open market place of Charleston, the seat of the courts and government ; and having driven above 20 of his devoted victims before him, he there indulged his murderous cruelty for more than two hours, in the face of day, and in the sight and hearing not only of free persons, but of magistrates, who offered no interruption to his barbarity. It appeared, that no less than seven magistrates were present in Charleston that day. To one negro man, he gave no less than 365 lashes—to a woman, 291—two other men and one woman, received above 200 each—three more received above 150 each—and a number from 100 to 150. In one case, two cart whips were applied at one time, to make a poor fellow confess that of which he persevered in declaring his ignorance. The wonder is, the majority did not die ; but being put under medical care, they recovered, with the exception of one woman, who sunk about six months thereafter, under a lingering illness, the consequence of the infliction. The House of Assembly of Nevis, vindicated its character by prosecuting this human fiend, on the acts of the Leeward Islands which subjects to fine or imprisonment, any one who shall be convicted of cruelly whipping his slave. But though the facts could not be gainsaid, Mr Huggins was acquitted, after a short deliberation by the Jury ;—and so completely supported was he by the sympathies of his fellow colonists, that he obtained a verdict against the printer of the St Kitt's Gazette, for a libel against him, in publishing the resolutions of the House of Assembly. So that while Huggins was allowed to pass with impunity, for that horrible infliction of torture of which he was proved to be guilty, the printer of a newspaper was subjected to imprisonment, for publishing an expression of disapprobation of it by the colonial parliament. The British government indeed, expunged from the magistracy, the names of those unfeeling and prejudiced men, who stood by unmoved, and allowed such a barbarous deed to be perpetrated. But in what manner did the community of Nevis respond to the sentiment thus promulgated by the crown, and the ministers of the crown ? Did the actors in the bloody tragedy sustain any discredit

among their neighbours on account of it? Quite the reverse. They have since participated in the highest honours their fellow colonists could bestow. The Assembly of Nevis consists only of 15 members, and Mr Huggins and his two sons have all been elected members of that body, by the free choice of their vicinage; and while they have been honoured as martyrs to the colonial rights, those who reprobated their delinquencies, were pursued with obliquy and dislike.

About a year after these tragedies were acted at Nevis, a series of murders of his slaves, by Arthur Hodge, member of council for the Virgin Islands, were brought to public notice, and ultimately to trial, by a quarrel between Hodge and one of his neighbours, who conceiving that it was safer to attempt to bring Hodge to justice, than to meet him in single combat, stepped forth as his accuser. Nine indictments for different murders were laid against him; being found guilty of the first, none of the others were tried; but one of the witnesses who had resided about three years on Hodge's estate, deponed, that he was satisfied, that during that period, Hodge lost 60 negroes at least, by the severity of his punishments, only one negro as he believed, having died during that time, a natural death. The cases mentioned in the different indictments, were almost all instances of death from flogging with the cart whip. The case of Prosper, which was that of which he was found guilty, will serve to demonstrate what may go on for years in the Colonies, and no one interfere to stop the savage hand which is inflicting such torture on his fellow creatures. "Prosper was in his master's presence laid down, and for more than an hour, cart-whipped without intermission. He was then taken up by Hodge's order, and with his hands tied behind his back, lashed to a tree; Hodge then ordered the driver to use 'close quarters,' the whip in this case being shortened, and going all round his body, cutting every part, particularly the stomach and belly, and making at the same time comparatively little noise. In this situation, Prosper was beaten till he fainted; his head hanging downwards, and was no longer able to cry out. He was then carried to the sick room, where within a fortnight he died." One of the cases was that of a child of ten years old, which was flogged alive, by being dipped by her master's order in a copper of boiling liquor. It was scarcely possible, one of the witnesses swears, to remain in the sick house, on account of the offensive smell proceeding

from the corrupted wounds of cart-whipped slaves. This monster in human shape, had his den of misery very near the chief town of Tortola. In the year 1803, Mr Hodge was owner of 140 negroes ; and in 1811, when his career was stopped, they were reduced to 35. The decrease, in consequence of the poll tax, must have been matter of record, and Hodge was notorious for his cruelties, yet no inquest was called to investigate this mystery—no one thought it his duty to interfere in behalf of a slave ; and as a testimony that the colonists sympathised in the argument maintained by the culprit's counsel, “that it was no greater offence in law for his owner to kill a slave, than it would be to kill his dog,” notwithstanding the clearest proof of the atrocious and barbarous murder, the jury recommended him as a fit object for the royal clemency.

In consequence of the investigations which were set on foot into the slave trade at the Mauritius, information regarding the state of slavery itself, as well as the slave trade, was communicated ; the general nature of which information was corroborated by the official documents, and some particulars of which, as published in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, and offered to be verified by the informants, are as follows :—Two young women on the Bell-ombre Estate, had absconded from their tyrants—the one being absent one month, the other two years. They were both advanced in pregnancy when taken, and both were ordered to suffer the same punishment. One of them petitioned that the punishment might be delayed till her delivery ; but the overseer said, that as she was so knowing, she should suffer the more. The punishment of this girl then began, and the informant who was an eye witness, resolved to see the end of it ; but after 160 lashes had been inflicted, the shrieks of the sufferer became so piercing, that he could not endure the spectacle. On returning some time after, he found that both had gone through the whole punishment assigned to them. Collars with projecting spikes, were fastened round their necks, their collars being attached to each other by an iron chain. This was in 1821. Another individual who was on the same estate for some time during 1820 and 1821, stated, that he often counted the lashes inflicted, and with the exception of two youths who received 70 each, he never knew of an instance where less than 100 were given. It was common, he said, to rub salt and pepper into the wounds, to prevent them from festering, and enable the sufferers sooner to return to labour, and bear a repetition of the

punishment. When it is remembered, that the thong of the whip was from 5 to 6 feet long, and from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter in the thickest part, it will be no matter of surprise, that such cruelties occasioned the death of the slaves, and that the annual decrease on Bell-ombre appeared from the returns, to be even on the proprietor's own statement, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, while the annual increase of the free blacks was 2 per cent, making a difference between the free blacks and those in bondage, of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. One circumstance marked the general acquiescence of the colonists in these barbarities, because it made them a matter of notoriety, and that was the selection of Sunday—the Sabbath of rest, and the hallowed day of God, for the day of punishment; and generally above 30, and sometimes up to 50, of these deeds of blood were perpetrated on each returning Sabbath.

That such inflictions indeed, should frequently end in death, could not be doubted. The great decrease in the numbers of the slaves, proves that fact uncontestedly, and the following brief statement draws a picture which could not be rare, and which accordingly passed as an unimportant occurrence, without observation. The last mentioned witness states, that in July 1820, being on a plantation, he saw two slaves brought out to be punished. They were extended on a wooden beam, and 120 lashes with unusually heavy whips, were inflicted on each. On the following Wednesday, having occasion to go to the Hospital, he saw laid out the dead bodies of the same two slaves. The wounds were putrid, and sent forth a rank smell, and he afterwards saw them both carried out tied up in mats, to the burial ground. They were murdered evidently, but no one cared for a slave. A still more horrid tale remains to be told. Madame Nayle, a proprietrix of some note, had harboured a runaway, and information of the fact having been given to the owner of the runaway, by a female slave of her own, Madame Nayle proceeded to punish her. She commenced by tearing all the teeth out of her head—then cut off her nose—her ears—and last of all her breasts, under which operation the slave died. The case was notorious; but though a few inquiries were made by the company of police, the accused was allowed to remain unmolested, till the alarm excited by the expected appointment of a commission of inquiry in 1823, caused some appearance of activity to be put forth. Not a shadow of doubt existed as to her guilt; but the commissioners did not

arrive, and although the law of the colony admitted of slave evidence, where white evidence could not be obtained, the Judges would not take the benefit of that provision of law ; and Madame Nayle, after being for some time detained in an anomalous state, not in jail, but in the house of the jailor, where apartments were fitted up for her, with a piano-forte and other ornamental appendages, and where she received visitors as heretofore, was allowed to depart, and the matter sunk into oblivion.

And was it to perpetuate such atrocities as these—was it to proclaim that Britons, free enlightened Britons, not only would tolerate, but would foster such atrocities, that Parliament, not the people, gave a bounty to the Mauritius sugar over the sugars of Bengal? Was it because the Mauritius sugar was raised by the blood and agony of slaves, while that of Bengal was the produce of the cheerful toil of freemen ? Surely, Sir, a day of reckoning for this will come ; and when God does call you and those who have undertaken responsibility in this matter to give in your account, what will you answer ?

It is unavailing to say, that these are old and obsolete tales ; the horrors of Berbice and the Mauritius, are not old and obsolete ; but as long as slavery lasts, it will furnish the same melancholy calendar of crime. It is inherent in its nature ; for when we think of 800,000 unprotected beings, subjected to the infliction of torture, not merely by their owners, but by the numerous persons connected with an estate to whom the immediate charge is necessarily delegated, we must deem slave owners and overseers to be pure angels, and not corrupt men, to doubt for a moment the necessary result of such a state of society. I must therefore, still bring down the history of cruelty to the latest accounts, and select the cases from different colonies. The Fiscal's Reports from Berbice, afford the greatest number of details ; but looking to the enormities committed, it is very difficult to select, there are so many, and all so atrocious. I choose the following, however, because the first drags to light, the crimes to which our colonial slavery gives rise ; and the second, characterizes the perfect recklessness of every thing affianced to humanity, which it engenders in those familiarized to its horrors.

Brutus, a watchman belonging to plantation Providence, complained that “ the manager wanted my Peggy ;” I said, no,—he followed her, I said, no. He asked her three times, I

said, no. Manager asked me again on Friday night, I refused. Saturday morning he flogged me." And what was the result of this application for protection?—The manager acknowledges having flogged the old man, and specifies no reason for doing so;—he does not deny his solicitation to him to prostitute his daughter; but merely denies that the father was flogged for protecting his child. And the result is, the dismissal of the complaint, with an admonition to the manager.

The case of Rousje has been much canvassed, and much obliquy was thrown on Lord Suffield and others, for mentioning such incredible barbarity, as if any degree of barbarity were incredible in the actual circumstances of our colonial slavery. The official reports, however, afford too condemning a proof of the truth of all that was stated.

Rousje complained that being sent to pick coffee by the manager, she represented to him, that being advanced in pregnancy she was unable to stoop; but being ordered to go, she went and picked the coffee on her knees. The work being examined, and the quantity ordered not being got, the manager directed the driver, Sondag, to range the women out on the plank, and to begin and flog them from one to another. "I began," said Sondag, on his examination, "and went on till I came to the woman Rousje. I gave them about 12 or 13 stripes with the whip doubled. On coming to Rousje, I observed to the manager, this woman is pregnant; the manager said, go on, that was not my business." The question being put to him, whether the manager on his representation of the pregnancy, made use of the words, "never mind, flog her till the blood comes," he replied, "yes, he did." This happened on the Friday. On Saturday she went to the field, but could not work, and was sent to the hospital; but the doctor, on the ground of exercise being good for her, sent her back to the field. On Sunday she was delivered of a child, of which the following description was given by herself, and her husband, to whom she had previously born seven children, and by all who saw the child:—The child's arm was broken, one eye out, bruised and sunk in the head. He was a fine male child quite formed, in every respect perfect, thinks it was more than five months."

What became of the ruffian who could perpetrate such a crime in cold blood, remains to be explained by the authorities in Berbice. The fiscal carried the case for trial, before

the criminal court, and states that the sentence of the court was attached to his report: but no such document has made its appearance.

Having used the word *reckless*, I cannot refrain from introducing the following illustration of it. The manager, as already mentioned, having flogged the slave Brutus, laid another negro on the ground, with two drivers over him, and gave him 100 lashes. The innocence of the slave was afterwards proved and acknowledged; on complaining, the manager told him if he did not hold his tongue, he would be put in the stocks. The owner Mr Henry said, I "cannot help it, it is not my fault, the punishment was the manager's fault;" and on the case being brought to official investigation, and the manager admitting that he had given him 39 lashes, the legal number, for however many may have been given, there are never more than 39 acknowledged, and admitting also, that he had confined him in the stocks every night for a week; the whole redress given to the poor slave was, a reprimand to the manager for punishing a Negro on such slight grounds. Thus, on the impulse of the moment, without trial or opportunity of defence, a British subject is subjected to a torture equal to a military punishment of 1000 lashes; and when it is ascertained that the monster who inflicted it, had not a shadow of ground for the infliction, the sufferer receives no redress, and the criminal receives a reprimand and advice to be more cautious. Is not this *reckless*?—The law is barbarous, and its administrators are equally so.

The case of the Mosses of Bahama has drawn forth an expression of regret from you, and no marvel it should do so. It is impossible to improve on the delineation of this case given in Mr Huskisson's dispatch, which stamps it moreover, with a seal of authentication that puts an end to all controversy. "The slave girl, Kate, was accused of theft, but some disobedience in refusing to mend the clothes, was the more immediate cause of her punishment. On the 22d July, 1826, she was confined in the stocks, and she was not released till the 8th of August following, being a period of 17 days. The stocks were so constructed, that she could not sit up or lie down at pleasure; and she remained in them night and day. During this period, she was flogged repeatedly; one of the overseers thinks about six times, and red pepper was rubbed upon her eyes, to prevent her sleeping. Tasks were given

her which, in the opinion of the same overseer, she was incapable of performing—sometimes because they were beyond her powers, at other times because she could not see to do them, on account of the pepper having been rubbed on her eyes—and she was flogged for failing to accomplish these tasks. A violent distemper had been prevalent on the plantation during the summer. It is in evidence, that on one of the days of her confinement she complained of fever, and that one of the floggings she received was the day after she made this complaint. When she was taken out of the stocks she appeared to be cramped, and was then again flogged. The very day of her release she was sent to field labour, (though hitherto a house servant) and on the evening of the third day ensuing, was brought before her owner as being ill and refusing to work, and she then complained of having had fever. They were of opinion, that she had none then, but gave directions to the driver, if she should be ill, to bring her to them for medicines in the morning. The driver took her to the Negro house, and again flogged her, though this time apparently without orders from her owners to do so. In the morning, at 7 o'clock, she was taken to work in the field, where she died at noon."

No wonder that you felt some commiseration, and expressed someregret, that such wanton butchery should havetaken place ina Britishcolony ; and no wonderthat you should still more regret that such barbarous scenes should not only pass without excitement before the colonial public, but that, as you well express it, their sympathies should all be on the side of the wrong doer, and against the slave. These murderers were tried and convicted, and condemned to a short imprisonment and fine, and the public indignation rose, not against the crime, but against the punishment. Applications were made from all quarters for the remission of the sentence ; and the Governor, General Grant, (I am ashamed of my countryman) seconded the application, insisting in his dispatch, that the criminals were to be pitied for the untoward melancholy occurrence,—that theyhadalwaysbeen favourably spoken of in every respect, "*including that of slave management;*" and therefore he is anxious, he says, that persons of their respectability should be spared from imprisonment, and that "*the mulct should be relinquished, lest they should be thought cruel and oppressive beyond others.*"

How full of import of the deepest interest are these statements of the Governor. We have seen what the treatment of the Mosses was to this poor slave, and the Governor officially declares, that their treatment was favourably spoken of. We have seen the barbarity exercised by these individuals, and the Governor applies for a remission of the fine, lest its exaction might lead to an impression that they were more cruel and barbarous than others ; and as if he doubted, that the minds of the people at home might not easily credit these statements, he adds a proof of the fact which, indeed, must shut the mouths of all gainsayers :—“ Notwithstanding their being in gaol,” he says, “ they are visited by the most respectable persons in the place, and by all who knew them before.” Indeed, when the time of their imprisonment expired, their liberation was hailed by the colonists as a day of jubilee, and celebrated by the festivity of a public dinner. And are these the premises upon which, you—the able, and in general, so far as I can see, the mild digestor of the British Law—are these the premises on which you shrink back from all interference with the colonies, and recommend to Parliament to leave 800,000 of our fellow subjects without protection, in the hands of these very colonists, with a recommendation of the poor blacks to their kindly feelings and their tender mercies.

It is vain, Sir, after the publication of the details of the cruelties in the Colonies of Berbice and Bahama, to talk of the humanity of the owners of slaves, or others connected with slave property. In all the hundreds of atrocious cases mentioned in the Berbice Reports, the owners, the managers, the attorneys, the overseers, and in a majority of cases the magistrates, are inculpated. The maxim of the Roman law, *quod facit per alios facit per se*, is founded in the nature of things, and even the mortgagees under it, cannot clear themselves altogether of the stigma, which attaches to the whole copartnery.

The judicial murders which occurred in Jamaica, in December 1823 and in 1824, might of themselves be sufficient to illustrate the evils of slavery. Without any evidence to convict, even of a misdemeanor, 8 slaves were apprehended, tried within two days, condemned and executed within four days more ; and when these proceedings, far exceeding in atrocity the iniquities of Judge Jeffray’s, were arraigned in Parliament, the only defence set up was, that the evil was in the law, and not in its administrators. The Attorney General asked if the

House could fail to say that the system of law deserved reprobation in the highest degree. "He condemned the system in its general principle; he condemned it in its mode of working as developed in the cases before the House." The Solicitor General, while he did not contend that the trials had been properly conducted, rested the defence on this, that "such as they were, they were in accordance with the laws of Jamaica." "That the law was bad," he said, "and required a thorough reformation, every individual on both sides of the House was agreed—that on all trials the black should be on the same footing with the white, he maintained as strongly as any man; but he would not stigmatize individuals, who had only acted according to the existing state of law. The House, he trusted, would execute the duty of amending that law. He agreed fully with his honourable friend opposite, as to the hated and *accursed nature of the system of slavery.*" And what said Mr Canning? "Nay, he might say that the amendment would but satisfy, not all the feelings which a perusal of these papers naturally and necessarily excited;—not all the feelings which might very properly be expressed in communications between man and man; but that which was most fitting in Parliament to resolve; and this would operate as effectually on the colonies as a specific censure, while it avoided all the inconveniences, with which a censure on the proceedings of a Court of Judicature would be attended." And what was the amendment thus introduced in order to soften down an expression of feeling, which, however admitted to be necessarily excited by the enormous injustice of these trials and executions, it was deemed necessary to put under restraint in a Parliamentary resolution? It was the following sweeping anathema against the whole system of Colonial Slavery. "Resolved, *nem con.* that this House sees in the proceedings which have been brought under its consideration, with respect to the late trials of slaves in Jamaica, farther proof of the evils inseparably attendant upon a state of slavery; and derives therefrom increased conviction, of the propriety of the resolutions passed by this House on the 18th May, 1823." And what amendment has been introduced by the Assembly of Jamaica, upon these laws which were thus officially denounced in Parliament as prominent botches on an accursed system? Would slave evidence at this moment be received to 'rescue a victim from the fangs of blind prosecutors, or perverted wit-

nesses, looking for freedom as the reward of their perjury ? would a thousand Christian slaves be admitted in a Jamaica Court, to gainsay the grossest accusation, or to establish on behalf of a slave, against a white, an act of cruelty, though proved to have been inflicted by the palpable marks of injury ?

These eloquent declamations against Colonial Slavery, were uttered in the year 1826, and although numbers would not then admit, that such a case of contumacy had occurred, as would authorize an immediate interference by the British Parliament, it was stated both by Mr Canning and Lord Bathurst, that bills for separate acts, embracing all the points in the orders of Council, had been sent out to the colonies ; and though not pledged, it was intimated pretty plainly, that the rejection of them would constitute that act of contumacy, which would warrant the British Legislature, in taking the work into their own hands. It is now 1830, and four years have elapsed since this decisive trial was made, and what has been done ? Even the abrogation of the flogging of females, which Mr Canning stated to " be the simplest, shortest, and cheapest mode, by which the colonies could show a disposition to comply with the wishes of Government," has been scouted as the subversion of all authority ; and can there after this be still any doubt as to the actual existence of contumacy, and if so, what becomes of the consistency of Government, and the fulfillment of Mr Canning's promise, that if a case of contumacy did arise, he would advise an enforcement of what they contumaciously resisted. The colonies rejected with contumely and contempt, these several bills, and have re-enacted, in defiance of the Government, the very identical laws which his Majesty had been advised to disallow.

It was maintained as an incontrovertible truth—an axiom in colonial discussion, that since the abolition of the slave trade, the necessity of preserving the health of the slave would secure his good treatment ; but experience has proved, that the spirit of our colonial slavery inverts every thing, and belies all the ordinary principles of reasoning. It is proved by that most decisive species of testimony, that notwithstanding the ascertained annual decrease of the ascertained number of the plantation slaves employed in cultivating sugar, the owners of sugar estates do still overwork the slaves, compelling them to labour for one half of the year, during no less a period than 17 hours a-day ; and the single fact, that the proportion of deaths is greatest on the most profitable estates, such as those in Tri-

nidad and Demerara, is of itself demonstration, that where the temptation of profit occurs, the colonist is ready to work his slave to death. And is not this sufficient ground, for taking the duty of legislating for the protection of such slaves, out of the hands of their owners, and committing that important trust into the hands of freemen—to the British Parliament?

I shall conclude this narrative of crime and suffering, with the case of Mrs Earnshaw, who, in consequence of the failure to redeem the special pledge given in 1829, that a law of the British Parliament would be passed to legalise slave evidence, has been allowed to escape with impunity, from the punishment she must have received, under any code of laws not tainted with Colonial corruption.

Eleanor Mead is a slave belonging to Colchis estate, in the parish of Trelawny, Jamaica. On the first of April last, her mistress, Mrs Earnshaw, having taken offence at something which this slave had said or done, in the course of a quarrel with another slave, ordered her to be stripped and prostrated on the ground, and in her own presence, caused the male driver, to inflict upon her bared body, 58 lashes of the cart whip. Eleanor Mead was the mother of nine children. One of the persons ordered to hold her prostrate during the punishment, was her own daughter Catherine. When one side had been sufficiently lacerated in the opinion of Mrs Earnshaw, she told the driver to go round and flog the other side. Mrs Earnshaw then ordered her to be conveyed in her naked and exposed state to the bilboes, by two men, she herself walking behind till she reached the bilboes, and had her feet fastened in them. In the course of the same evening, Eleanor Mead escaped from the bilboes, and reached Falmouth, with her daughter Catherine, and there made her complaint to the Custos, (a county officer) Mr Miller. Mr Miller, and his brother magistrate, although they saw that a severe punishment had been inflicted, yet having no evidence but that of slaves, to prove that the punishment had exceeded 39 lashes, and it being held no crime to inflict that number, though equal to about 500 lashes of a military punishment, sent the complaint and her daughter back to Colchis, with a letter stating, that as she had not been proved to have received a punishment contrary to law, she had been ordered home; and they requested that she might be allowed to resume her usual em-

ployment, which¹ was that of a house servant. On returning to the estate, however, neither she nor her daughter were restored to their usual employment, but were ordered into the field with a hoe and bill. On refusing to go they were placed in the stocks, and on the following day, the 8th April 1830, Eleanor Mead was sent by the attorney for the estate, Mr Frater, to the workhouse, with an order to the superintendent, authorising him to receive her, and there safely keep her for one month, giving her 39 lashes on going in. In her way thither, she contrived to present herself to the view of a magistrate, Mr Ogilvy, who on hearing her statement, and reading Mr Frater's order, interposed to prevent this second punishment from being carried into effect, the consequences of which, he thought, might have been of a serious nature, as she had not recovered from the effects of the first. This interference on the part of the magistrate, excited loud complaints on the part of Mr Frater, who on the 7th April, informed Mr Miller by letter, that he had not only sent the mother, Eleanor Mead, to the workhouse to be punished with thirty nine lashes more, but that he had ordered the overseer of Colchis to inflict also on the daughter Catherine, thirty nine lashes, and "to keep her confined till she behaves herself." The Custos replied on the 8th April, by recommending more lenient measures to Mr Frater, than he had stated it to be his intention to pursue. On the 12th, Mr Frater repels with indignation the caution of the Custos, and says, "I will defy the world to accuse me of any improper, or cruel act towards a slave during my residence in this country for upwards of thirty years. The slave law," he adds, "requires that the complaint of the slave having been proved frivolous, the magistrates should give redress to the master, by punishing the slave, and not, as had been done in this instance; to adopt a mistaken philanthropy by turning the slave back on the owner, with directions that no further notice is to be taken of their misconduct. Such a decision never could have been contemplated by the legislature, in enacting this law, for it is striking at the very root of our constitutional rights, that we are so strenuously defending." On the 3d of May, the case was submitted to a board of twenty-three magistrates, when it was resolved by a majority of nineteen to four, to forward the whole of the evidence to the Attorney General for his opinion. The Attorney General's

opinion, dated the 15th May 1830, is, that as he cannot receive the evidence of slaves, as proving excess of punishment, (that is to say, above thirty-nine lashes,) and there being no other direct proof to that point, he thinks no case is substantiated against Mrs Earnshaw. And as to the charge of a second punishment being ordered, when the slave had not recovered from the former one; the magistrates he conceived had acted properly in *suspending* it, but the offence was not complete so as to form a ground of prosecution, unless such second punishment had actually been inflicted. Two days after, on the 17th May, Eleanor Mead was sent back to Colchis, and placed under the uncontrolled power of Mrs Earnshaw, and Mr Frater; so that these monsters in human shape are still in possession of these unhappy slaves,—the torture suspended, for punishment it could not be called where there was no crime, was no doubt inflicted and for a word, or a look, which in opposition to the merciful precept of the gospel, they construe into a fault, these slaves are exposed as long as they live, to be mangled by the cart whip, accompanied with circumstances of the most debasing indecency, without any restraint that I can see from any law, and still less from any magistrate in the colony.

The case of Minke, reported by the Fiscal of Berbice, where the magistrates were so horrified with the appearance of the mangled slave, that they prohibited the lacerations from being fully exposed, is just such another demonstration that the system is, as the Solicitor General says, accursed,—after reproaching the master in strong terms for his barbarity, the magistrates declared they could do nothing but restore poor Minke to his charge. I hope death was more merciful and soon relieved her. I say, Sir, is it not most monstrous, that in cases of cruelty, the forfeiture of the slave is not always part of the penalty, and such forfeiture when made, is not in favour of the slave. Let it be enacted, that in all cases of oppression to the slave, freedom shall be awarded as the compensation, and it will afford more effectual protection than a hundred other pains and penalties.

The atrocious cruelty which is thus practised upon our fellow men and fellow subjects, being admitted, I submit to you that an expression of regret is quite inadequate to the responsibility which attaches to you. God has placed you in a prominent station, near the helm of the state, and I doubt not

you feel the obligations under which this pre-eminence lays you, to consult His high and unalterable statute Book, and to discharge your important duties as one who must give an account. The Duke of Wellington may judge of your conduct, and determine your continuance in office, or withdrawal from it, as you may even in this question act according to his dictate, or the still voice of your own conscience ; but if you reflect justly, you will perceive that this is but a small matter in comparison—the grand point is, to be prepared for the Tribunal of Him, who will most assuredly call both the Duke of Wellington and you to judgment :—and then, Sir, and I solemnly press the appeal upon you, What will you answer, when the Lord Jesus Christ, He who made you, and died to redeem you,—when He puts the question, When I raised you up to high station, and put into your hand the power to stay the rod of oppression,—to protect the helpless slave—to let the prisoner go free ; and when by the light of my grace I convinced your mind, and showed you what was right,—How is it that you perverted my appointment, and left the poor and helpless slave in ignorance and misery in the house of bondage ? It is, Sir, an awful thought, not to you only, but to every one ; for although you stand on the hill and cannot be hid, every individual of these favoured isles, in the most obscure corner of them, has a talent to account for,—he may at least swell with his acclamation. the grand cry which comes from the length and the breadth of the land, and which demands from the truth of the government, the redemption of its pledge, and from the justice of Parliament, the immediate adoption of the measures necessary for blotting out this foul stain on the character of his country.

“ Out foul spot—out—I say ;
What, will these hands ne’er be clean—
Here’s the smell of blood still.”

There is one circumstance still unnoticed, which comes powerfully upon my mind ; and although I am anxious to relieve you and myself from farther discussion on this painful subject, I dare not close without brief notice of it. It is notorious as a matter of frequent occurrence, that slaves are taken in execution for the payment of taxes, and other debts to government. Advertisements for sales may be seen in the Jamaica Gazettes, every month. I observe, that in Antigua, in 6 years, from 1st January 1821, besides ten slaves escheated to

the Crown, 28 were seized for taxes, and sold on an average at £16 : 15s. sterling each. The proportion of the slave population of Antigua to the whole British slave population, is about $\frac{1}{27}$ th, which would give an average number of 126 slaves annually seized for taxes, and sold by the agents of the British government. As above stated, the average gross produce of the Antigua slaves was £16 : 15s. each ; after deducting the expence of the sale, it is surely a large allowance to hold that £15 was safely deposited in the government fund ; and for the 128 slaves thus seized, and lodged in the pestilential dungeon described by Rev. Mr Woodhouse, and carried like cattle to a public market, and there sold to the highest bidder, without inquiring as to his capacity for superintending the all-important interests of immortal souls—for these slaves thus disposed of, the great and glorious kingdom, of Great Britain and Ireland, puts into her treasury the sum of £1920. And this is her annual practice—and this while, by the protecting duties, as I have shewn, the country pays £974, in order to enable the slave owner to draw £100. You say, Sir, that to the slave when *he* disputes your title to hold him, you have no answer to make. Can the Chancellor of Exchequer think you make to *him* any satisfactory answer ? Undoubtedly not. But you say, that in Parliament you can talk differently ; there, however, you can only talk of compensation to the slave owners, and to that I have fully adverted ; but in the case I have now adduced, the slaveowner himself has “made a vanishing ;” and the Chancellor of Exchequer has no competitor in the field, which is left open to himself and the poor trembling slave. And what follows—my heart bleeds to tell it : Dearly as I love my native land—and no man loves her more truly or more purely—were I not allowed to avert my eye, and turn to some counterbalancing good, I do think, that in order to avoid the infamy of participating in such atrocious iniquity, I would abjure the very name of Briton. The victims thus left to the operation of British justice and humanity, after being a few weeks held as felons in jail, are dragged to the market place, and again consigned to all the misery of the most oppressive bondage. From the low price at which they sell, it would appear, that the slaves sold for taxes, are either the unsaleable portion remaining after the more vigorous slaves are disposed of, or in making the seizure, the officer takes those, the want of whom will least

affect the working of the estate ; and upon either supposition, the actual result is, that by the interposition of the British government, these unhappy victims, after having spent their strength in the service of a master whose fortunes have been blasted by the miasma of slavery, are now withdrawn from that estate on which their claim for support in old age might have been successfully maintained, and thrown into the hands of those, who, like the purchasers of worn out horses in this country, have made it their study, as it is their occupation, to extract by the lash of the whip, the last spark of exertion which the jaded and exhausted frame can yield. The fate of the "high mettled racer," even at the last stage of his downward progress, must be enviable compared to the fate of these slaves. The noble animal is miserable, it is true, but at death all is over. The poor slave, thus consigned to wickedness as well as wretchedness, is likely to be miserable in life and death—in time and eternity. This, Sir, is indeed but a small speck in the magnitude of this disc of darkness ; but minute as it is when viewed in comparison, it exhibits in itself the strongest outline of some of the most relentless features of colonial slavery.

You acknowledge, that the British Parliament has the right to frame and enforce the necessary enactments ; and the government, four years ago, indicated a sense of obligation to do so, if the colonists themselves would not do their duty. And surely after the circumstances I have narrated, and after your own confession, in unison with the illustration of West India feelings long ago given by Mr Fox,—that the sympathies of the colonial population are with the perpetrators of the atrocities, and against the slave, it would be worse than useless, to enter into any argument to shew, that such premises are in direct contradiction to the conclusion, that the slaves should be left to the kindly feelings of their owners. The statement in this part of your speech, and the somewhat similar conclusions to which Sir George Murray came, I would have considered as erroneously reported, had they not too well accorded with the practical issue of the matter. But however that may be, and however creditable it may be to you, to apprise the public, that though you recognise the power, you mean to oppose the exercise of it in favour of the slave population, the public will not, I am assured, rest satisfied with such a disjointed argument, as the basis for decid-

ing this question. If you really believe your premises, you will, I trust, come to the sound conclusion, that as the colonists have by word and deed declared, that they will not do the work themselves, the British Parliament have no option but to do it for them. Sure I am, now that the country is once more awake, that the overwhelming popular energy which annihilated the slave trade, will annihilate colonial slavery; and how much wiser will it be for you and your colleagues, to yield to the current and employ your superior information and authority to guide the stream, than by pertinaciously attempting to raise obstructions to its course, increase the violence of the torrent, till the risk become imminent, of you yourselves being swept away by the triumphant flood.

Let it be done with all the tenderness which is compatible with justice, but at allevents let it be done. And when you have thus assisted the great work—by emancipating the children immediately,—by fostering the means of religious instruction—by tying up the ruthless hand from arbitrary punishment—by limiting the work required to the physical abilities of the workman—by securing slave property, and facilitating manumission—when by the introduction of equal laws between man and man, of whatever shade of colour he may be, you secure the lives and property of the slave—when you have been instrumental in accomplishing these the grand preparatives for universal emancipation, you will have acquired a claim upon your country's gratitude, which will cover you with a more durable, and more effectual shield of defence, against all the vicissitudes and storms which so often cloud the sky of a political life, than you can ever elaborate for yourself, out of the most intense, and most successful speculation, on the merely political relations of society.

I am respectfully,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

JOHN CAMPBELL.

POSTSCRIPT.

It would be affectation in me, to shut my eyes to the division in sentiment which has manifested itself amongst the friends to the Abolition of Slavery, and having that division thrust on my observation, it would be unmanly to pass it by in silence. I would undoubtedly have rejoiced could we all have agreed on the mode, as well as on the principle ; but that could scarcely be expected where the evil is so great, and the remedy has been rendered so difficult by the infatuation of the parties maintaining it. No one, Sir, possessed of your acumen, can fail to perceive, that instead of being an indication of weakness, these separate movements are, on the contrary, an effect of exuberant strength and luxuriance. You must be aware, that those who do not at present advocate the immediate Abolition of Slavery, are withheld from so doing by the belief, that in order to effect it safely and beneficially, it is desirable that the slave be previously trained for freedom. Were the question at issue, whether Colonial Slavery as it now exists, shall be maintained, or an act passed for its immediate abolition, I for one, could not hesitate a moment. There is no evil under the sun, the risk of which I would not incur, rather than continue one hour a willing abettor of our Colonial Slavery. The basis, I apprehend, of the opinion held by those, who with me prefer, if attainable, the training of the slave for freedom previous to his emancipation, to an

immediate emancipation, accompanied by regulations for his moral improvement is, that the same power of the popular mind which could effect the achievement of total abolition, should be sufficient to achieve any thing short of that extreme point, and therefore that the alternative is not, slavery as it now is, but slavery amended in every possible way. During the ensuing Session, the Legislature may stay the progress of the plague, by declaring, that after the first of Jan. 1831, no British subject can be born a slave—and it may protect the present slave population, by the total abrogation of arbitrary corporal punishment, and by legalizing slave evidence, and by giving an equal administration of law to black and white. It may provide ample means for religious instruction, and by opening wide the door of manumission to the industrious, it may enrich the master and emancipate the slave. If all this is done in good faith and in the view of universal emancipation in a few years, it appears to me that the process of recovery from the present malady, will be much more safe and sure for all parties, and especially for the slaves, than it would be by administering such a stimulant in one sense, and such a narcotic in another sense, as a transcript of the Mexican decree would be if applied to our colonies. It is no sufficient answer to the objection that the slaves in their present state are unfit for freedom, to ask whose fault is it that they are unfit? the question admits the fact, and the fact establishes the objection—were a man driven to temporary madness by the injuries received from some other man, would it be a good objection to putting him under wholesome restraint, to point out the culprit who had caused the calamity, and say it was his fault? would it not be the suggestion of humanity as well as prudence to take the poor maniac into custody, and apply the means to restore him to health, and then send him out again to society? And this view is not obscured by the observation of an excellent friend of mine, an immediate abolitionist, who attempted to throw some dust upon it by remarking, that in the case supposed, the maniac would not be put in charge of the person who, by his injurious treatment, caused the derangement. That may be true, but the point at issue is not the choice of the keeper, but the liberation of the maniac. I do not pretend to say, that the Colonist is the person to whom, had I any other choice, I would commit the charge of the slave; but there is no choice. The slave must

remain with his master, or be liberated. But I am satisfied, that the master may be effectually prevented from injuring his slave. Let the power of inflicting corporal punishment arbitrarily, in any degree whatever, be abolished. Let the single fact, of a master inflicting one lash without trial, and the sentence of a Judge, on slave evidence, or any other good evidence, be followed by the emancipation of the slave. Let all trespasses against slaves be punished by fines paid to the slave, or emancipation of part of his time, and let local Judges sent out from this country, determine all questions between master and slave. The expence will be considerable; but it would be a calumny on the country to say, that whatever be necessary for that purpose, will ever create a whisper of disapprobation. The masters will still have a power equivalent to that which is sufficient for the maintenance of military discipline: and I have no doubt, it will be found sufficient for the proper management of his slaves. One excellent effect of such a regulation will be, that by removing the power to inflict such personal injuries as must rouse the passions of hatred and revenge, those kindly feelings between the white and black population, which you so anxiously recommend, will be generated and cherished; and such a number of slaves will in a few years be emancipated, that an act of abolition of slavery may be safely passed, as it will then only throw an additional number into ranks already numerous, and well arranged for carrying on the necessary labour. The efficacy of similar circumstances in securing the well-being of the country, was fully established by the results of the previous mitigation and ultimate abolition of slavery in Mexico and Chili.

I must again repeat, that it is because we expect the wisdom of Parliament, and of his Majesty's Ministers, will induce them to yield to the universal voice of the people—a voice expressed not by the more ignorant and easily excited portion of the population alone, but by all ranks and conditions of men—that they will yield to them, not partial measures tending to delude and disappoint, but such substantial and effective enactments as will really protect the slave, and speedily put an end to slavery—it is because we expect this, that we do not press for instant abolition. One more Session of evasions and delays, and we will have nothing to do but despair of any voluntary amendment in the condition of the slave, and be driven to join as one man the ranks of those

who, somewhat more impatient of delay, though not one iota more intolerant of slavery than we are, now demand that the state of slavery shall immediately cease.

These are not the times, Sir, for exciting popular commotions. If excitements would be dangerous on a mere shadowy question of political franchise, what would it be, if the popular feeling were inflamed and roused into action, in a case where justice, and humanity, and religion were with the people ; and the Government to which they were opposed, were standing the assault, in defence of a system which all acknowledged to be baneful, and one of their own official organs designated as accursed. I would not envy the responsibility of the man who brought this highly favoured,—happy land, into a state of such awful peril as this.—I cannot bring myself to believe **SIR ROBERT PEEL** will be that man.